THE LOST VOCAL ART AND ITS RESTORATION

W. WARREN SHAW

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THE LOST VOCAL ART

AND ITS RESTORATION

WITH PRACTICAL EXERCISES FOR
THE USE OF SINGERS AND TEACHERS

BY
W. WARREN SHAW

WITH INTRODUCTION BY
DAVID BISPHAM

20 EXPLANATORY ILLUSTRATIONS

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To My Wife

EMMA SUELKE SHAW

WHOSE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE
IN THE ART OF SINGING HAS BEEN OF
INESTIMABLE VALUE TO THE AUTHOR

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"THE mind must be trained to the perception of beautiful sounds. It must hold these sounds as ideal while practising with the voice. If a person holds the right ideal steadily before his mind while properly practising, repetition will cause this ideal to take dominating possession of the tones, and thus shape them to itself and become incarnated with them.

"The voice is capable of expressing every mental activity—intellectual and emotional. It rarely fails to reveal the lower order of feelings, as physical pleasure or pain. It can also reveal the higher realms of feeling—love of good and truth, sympathy and spiritual perception.

"The proper study of the voice is a study of the manifestations of the soul."—*From the Emerson School of Expression, Boston.*

VOICE IS THE AUDIBLE EXPRESSION OF THE SOUL

"THE best way to cultivate the voice is not to think about it. Actions become regal only when they are unconscious. The voice that holds us captive and lures us on, is used by its owner unconsciously. Fix your mind on the thought and the voice will follow. If you fear you will not be understood, you are losing the thought—you are thinking about the voice. If the voice is allowed to come naturally, easily and gently it will take on every tint and emotion of the Soul. The voice is the sounding-board of the Soul. God made it right. If your Soul is filled with Truth your voice will vibrate with love, echo with sympathy and fill your hearers with the desire to do—to be and to become."—*Elbert Hubbard.*

PREFACE

"The Lost Vocal Art" has for its purpose the restoration of the vital principle in systems or methods of voice culture which formerly characterized the Old Italian Method. The science of psychology is shown to be the real science on which the old school actually stood, and on which all really successful schools of voice culture must stand.

The principles scientifically explained as psychological are the fundamental governing forces of all artistic vocal development worthy of the name. It is pointed out that the old methods, while having these principles in operation, were *not* fortified by the scientific explanation of the how and wherefore of the matter.

The Old Masters were not aware of the scientific soundness of their position. Controversialists had not arisen. Empirical instruction was the only kind that was recognized, or used. When the attempt was made to advance new systems of instruction based upon the science of physiology, the teachers and singers of the old school were led like lambs to the slaughter. They did not resist, thinking that they might benefit themselves

by such knowledge as was evolved from scientific research.

The danger of constructive work which not only took cognizance of but attempted directly to govern the physical parts involved, did not at first appear. It took time to show the extent of the evil. The glamour of the newly acquired knowledge obtained through analysis, together with the undoubted truth of the things that were said concerning the physiological phenomena, served to hoodwink the representatives of the true school. They themselves became willing victims of the erroneous doctrines. They thought they were to become wiser men—more proficient in their art than ever, by the knowledge of these great discoveries.

Thus the evil had its origin, and the discovery of the laryngoscope aided and abetted the threatened downfall of correct principles—or their abandonment. Almost unwittingly the dependence upon the right principles gave place to dependence upon wrong principles.

What is known as the lost vocal art is shown to be nothing more nor less than the result of the loss or change of constructive principles which were formerly in use, and the resurrection of this lost art must come from the restoration of that true vital

principle made manifest in empirical instruction.

The ability of the master is determined by his ability not only to hear and judge correctly the voice of his pupils, but also to make them hear and correctly judge their own voices, and his skill must be further shown in the use of devices for the promotion of desired ends.

The physical activity which may be recommended as favorable means of development must not be confounded with the physiological principle. One is the assisting factor, and is general in principle—in recognition of the fact that physical elasticity renders the parts more capable of ready response to the demand of the will, directed toward the effect desired. The imagination and idealization of tone is placed before the action, this being the actual initiative.

This means concentrating the mind on tone desired and *willing* the effect, the process being in a measure subconscious and aided by physical activity. The other, the physiological principle, is the fixing of the mind upon and willing the specific activity of the process, or any part of it.

Although many attacks have been made upon scientific voice culture based upon physiology, due to the unfavorable results experienced by artists who have tried to proceed along these lines,

nothing of a scientific nature has been offered to show that the statements concerning the physical facts are incorrect. The truth of the matter is that analytically the physiologists are for the most part correct. Their sore and grievous error is in the *synthesis*, not in the *analysis*, of voice. Up to the present time we have had in refutation merely the history of the rejection of scientific voice culture by artists of experience. They know that physiological scientific voice consideration in singing or method in teaching is practically not only of little use, but is generally destructive rather than constructive in the practical working-out.

The empirical instruction of the old school is now shown to have a firm scientific foundation on which to stand. The Old Masters builded better than they knew, but were not knowingly or wittingly supported by scientific truth.

The Moderns who are not familiar with the truth evolved from what we may term a latter-day science—owing to its comparatively recent development—should acquaint themselves with its teachings.

They will doubtless then realize that Apollo may now stand on the immortal pedestal designed by Nature—the science of psychology.

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION

It is with great pleasure that I yield to the request of the author to write an introduction to his work, as I am entirely in sympathy with all he has to say concerning the importance of the psychological phase of the art of singing, as well as of the necessity for absolute mastery of the physical machinery by means of which we actually do sing. It is unnecessary for a man to know the names of the muscles of his legs and arms in order to be an athlete, but he must know how to use them to the best advantage. He must be taught by some one of experience in athletics how to get the best results with the least strain; and so it is with a singer. All birds are taught by their elders their language of song, as children are taught to speak, without specific instruction, in either case, in the mechanism of either song or speech.

Song, with human beings, is an extra sense; it is at least, an elaboration of the attribute of speech, of the gift of music, and of the sense of hearing, a combination of the three so intricate and so inti-

mate that it is no wonder that various modes of training have been resorted to in leading the armies of would-be singers, most of whom are totally unfitted for the task they find confronting them.

The successful singer is indeed a shining example of the theory of the survival of the fittest; and the wise master is one among ten thousand. These know, beyond all peradventure, that only those who can sing—who have naturally the combination of the many qualities that make a singer—should be permitted to study with a view to going before the public; and that very careful training of the voice in song and speech, with the best singers as models, and the watchful, conservative master as mentor, is absolutely indispensable to success.

Let the pupil look into the physiology of the throat if he so desires, but let him not think that this knowledge will enable him to sing, any more than that a runner should win a race because of his knowledge of the mechanism of his legs. The latter wins because he can run faster than his competitors, and knows better how to use his legs for having trained them: and so it is with the singer. The voice and general musical ability must be of more than average excellence, and must be carefully trained if he would win in the severe compe-

tition of to-day; and also it is imperative that the wise master guard the special sense that makes a singer, against the general lack of sense that so often mars him. Though the science of psychology may now be shown to be the basis of the work of the old Italian masters, I doubt if they would have called their mode of teaching "psychological," but it is well now so to distinguish it from the physiological method which is so productive of systems palpably erroneous, taught too often by those, forsooth, who cannot sing! The writer was a pupil of the elder Lamperti, and of Vannucini—direct descendants of the great masters of their Italian past—also of Shakespeare, Lamperti's principal English advocate, a man of fine intelligence, and of greater muscianship and wider experience before the public than most teachers among his contemporaries.

The secret of the so-called lost art of singing he sought in vain among the mazes of physiological science, and never did he place much reliance upon these puzzling questions. He tried to show his pupils not only how to master the physical by close attention to its obvious demands, but how to guide all so as to bring about the purest and most artistic vocal results by means of the exercise of that higher

mental quality which our author denominates the psychological principle.

Shakespeare seldom trained pupils for the stage; he taught them to sing. If they succeeded in oratorio, concert, or opera, it was because they knew how to sing, not because they were foisted upon the public and happened to succeed. He was heart and soul with the older Italians in discountenancing mediocrity. The lynx ears of Lamperti and of Shakespeare would not—could not—allow what they considered wrong in note or phrase, or ultimate inner sense to pass unchallenged.

Reliance upon the principles of physiology to correct physiological defects is, of course, essential; but the art of song is mental, and so is psychological in its higher development. When the body is in subjection to the mind, the will works its way with the world, and the spirit will hold sway over all things inanimate. By bringing to bear upon it the suavity of Italian vocal art, even the majestic roughness of the German tongue may be toned down without loss of strength and with positive gain of beauty. So obvious was this, some years ago, when Madame Cosima Wagner visited Covent Garden Opera, in London, that, after hearing a performance of her husband's

"Lohengrin," sung by Mesdames Nordica and Schumann-Heink, the brothers Jean and Edouard de Reszke, and the writer, she exclaimed, "I have to-night, for the first time in my life, heard Wagner sung from a melodious standpoint!" ("*vom Standpunkt melodieux.*") And why was that? It may safely be said that it was because the artists named had all studied the art of singing so well, from such an artistic standpoint, that even the difficulties of Wagner became comparatively easy to them, and the psychology of their complex rôles stood out triumphant over the material means of expression which so often prove a hindrance to the enjoyment of modern works. Let none suppose that such results, or such praise as Madame Wagner gave us, were to be obtained without long and arduous physical training; but let all be made aware that behind this must always be the extra, inner sense; the strong psychological undercurrent of the all-informing mind; for as long as the physical obtrudes itself, the manifestation of the higher quality will be hindered.

What is it that makes one violin better than another?—or, mayhap, superlatively good? The mind of its maker. What is it makes violin-playing good, bad, or indifferent, despite the excellence of

the instrument? The mind of the performer. In the days when artists could not buy tubes of paint ready-made, but were obliged to mingle their own pigments to obtain the desired shades, the great Sir Joshua Reynolds, renowned for the richness of his tones, was asked by an admiring junior aspirant to his honors, "Sir Joshua, what do you mix your colors with?" to which, like a flash, came the rejoinder from behind the great horn-rimmed spectacles, "With brains, sir, with brains."

But "who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" Who is there to make known to all the world the fact that Art, though long, is enduring; and to bring home to the unthinking the homily that Life is short and must be well used? To the merely physical and sensual, Art is nothing, and Life has no meaning. To the spiritual and the psychical, Art is of the things that bring the understanding of the possibility of eternal Life to the human race. Let not, then, the high gift of song be abused, but nurtured as coming to mortals, as it does, from a higher plane than is now recognized by those who would make of it merely a vehicle for sensuous enjoyment or for barter and trade.

November, 1913. David Bispham.

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PART I

THE LOST VOCAL ART

PRINCIPLES AND METHODS

In preparing a treatise on the subject of voice culture, which may serve as a guide and be of practical aid to vocal teachers and singers in developing the voice in a natural normal way, the fact has been taken into consideration that, because of the immense variety of opinions and views regarding the best means or methods, it will be necessary to treat the subject with care, proceeding along the broadest lines compatible with strict adherence to known scientific truth.

The fundamental principles involved are pointed out with due recognition of the laws of nature, which must always be observed in the process of natural normal vocal development; and for the purpose of counteracting some of the most flagrant violations of these laws, as shown in certain principles and doctrines which are persistently promulgated with such baneful effects.

As a matter of expediency, it is desirable to emphasize the important truth that vocal methods are, and should be, considered only as a means to an end, and that end, the acquiring of skill in singing. This involves not only vocal development, the control of poise and power in the management of the voice, but intelligent and comprehensive interpretation.

Strictly speaking, there is a different general method in the hands of every teacher, which method represents the most favored doctrines and means of procedure known to that teacher.

It represents that which in the judgment of each teacher is best, of the sum total of his experience.

Different specific methods as modifications of general method are often employed in different cases under observation. Indeed, it is often found that radical changes in method are not only desirable but absolutely necessary to meet the requirements of the various mental and physical conditions of the individual. Arbitrary methods are like ready-made garments—they do not fit many people at all, and as a rule fit poorly at best. It is sufficient to say that any method facilitating the work

of overcoming defects and tending toward bringing about ideal conditions is good so long as it accomplishes that purpose. What is wanted by the vocal world, however, is definite knowledge from which reliable synthetic methods may be evolved.

"What kind of knowledge is worth the most?" asks Herbert Spencer in his work on education. He answers the query in one word, "Science." And what is science? Science is knowledge of facts coördinately arranged and systematized; and the object of science is knowledge. As in science the object is knowledge, so in art the object is works.

In art, knowledge of truth is the means to an end; in science, truth is the end. Hence the absolute dependence of the best art upon science.

Art without scientific knowledge is constantly in danger of degenerating into artificiality, and there is a vast difference between these two, although they are often confounded.

The vocal world undoubtedly owes much that is good to the study and research of the true scientists; but to those scientists—chiefly physiologists—and their followers, who have theorized and

worked from false premises, it owes much that is evil.

It is mainly in the hope of further separating the wheat from the chaff in vocal training, particularly in its relation to the art of singing, that this work has been undertaken.

Such a course necessarily involves the consideration of the psychological phases of the subject, and the pointing out of the proper physiological considerations which are at the present time so misunderstood.

The analysis of vocal phenomena has already been successfully undertaken, so that a fairly correct criticism of nearly all defects and shortcomings common to the singing voice is available.

Synthetically or constructively, however, there remains much that is vague, indefinite, and misleading in the systems in general use.

Important differences of opinion regarding methods of training now exist, whereas, if the fundamental truth were well known, such differences could not exist.

Minor differences of opinion there will always be, but this should represent nothing more than

a healthy and legitimate variety of individual taste regarding the most desirable and best in all things pertaining to the art of singing. The fundamental principles, however, are inviolable.

THE PRESENT VOCAL SITUATION

In these days of general as well as of special interest in matters vocal, the progress of events pointing toward unanimity of opinion regarding the correct principles to be applied in the development of the singing voice is problematical.

The crystallization of ideas into something tangible and concrete in what is generally known as vocal method has not progressed as rapidly as might be supposed—in the light of scientific investigation and supposedly logical conclusions arising therefrom.

This is deplorable, for the reason that so many thousands of students of singing are spending much money and valuable time in seeking something which seems to become in the course of pursuit a veritable will-o'-the-wisp.

This is true of those who are studying seriously with the purpose of preparing themselves for a

professional career, as well as of those who are studying for the purpose of acquiring the art of singing as an accomplishment whereby they may entertain their friends and themselves.

To those who have set out to make singing their chief occupation and interest, it is, of course, of vital importance that their studies should be directed along the lines of least resistance, pointing to as rapid progress as is compatible with sound vocal development.

The chief difficulty confronting almost every aspirant for vocal honors is encountered at the very outset.

In most cases, the problem of voice management becomes at once the most difficult to solve. The acquiring of correct tonal poise and adequate vocal technique is the chief obstacle to the aspiring vocal artist throughout his preparatory course, and more often than otherwise continues to be the chief cause of whatever degree of embarrassment there may be throughout a more or less successful career.

Some authority with a love for epigrammatic expression has set the idea in motion among laymen that "singers are born, not made." No

sweeping assertion was ever made that was more subversive of the truth. Instead, singers are made, not born. It is just as true to say that doctors, lawyers, and clergymen are born, not made.

It is undoubtedly true that some are born with special talent for singing, and those who possess a marked talent are more easily trained and developed than those having a lesser degree of musical talent and physical adaptability, providing that they have ambition to become vocal artists; but it is a fact that a great number of successful vocalists were not, or at least did not seem to be, particularly gifted originally as to quantity, quality, or range of voice. Their success has been due to persistent, untiring effort to succeed in their chosen profession.

These successes are practical examples of what faithful, unswerving devotion to a cause, or, in other words, fixedness of purpose, can accomplish.

It is a verification of the words of Owen Meredith: "The man who seeks one thing in life, and but one, may hope to achieve it before life is done; but he who seeks all things wherever he goes, but reaps from the hopes which around him he sows, a harvest of bitter regrets."

Lack of concentration and consecration to a chosen profession or calling is the chief cause of failure in almost every walk of life. The various distractions which interfere with the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of each pilgrim on life's journey, and which are allowed to creep in, vitiating the vital forces of mental and physical progress, are factors which can be held accountable for many failures. This is true, of course, in the vocal as in all other spheres of life.

Special fitness for any particular field of endeavor should always be a matter of prime consideration as a matter of course.

The person who elects to prepare for a vocal career should first be sure of sufficient musical talent and natural voice to warrant the expenditure of time, money, and effort necessary to an eventually successful outcome.

When these considerations have been given due weight, and the person has decided to embark upon this particular voyage, the thing to be considered of equal importance to the necessary vocal development is the acquiring of a broad musical education, which many singers lack.

Next comes the language—the mother tongue first. Unless the cultivation from childhood has been exceptional, the candidate will be surprised at his lack of a correct understanding of enunciation and pronunciation.

The Italian, French, and German languages should then be taken up, each with a native teacher, if possible. The work being well laid out and regulated, proceed with the determination to win. Will power directed mainly toward the cultivation of patience and endurance must then be depended upon to record success.

Regarding the development of the singing voice, it is certainly true that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." That correct fundamental principles are little understood is a fact too well known to require any discussion. That pseudo-scientific methods and individual egotistical methods abound in our great cities, systematically defeating their own ostensible purpose, is an equally well-known fact. Incidentally, the so-called "Italian Method" is at once the most abused and misunderstood slogan of them all. In the voice problems, the field is especially open and adapted

to the operations of the charlatan. This fact has long been known to the capable and conservative teachers who have had occasion to listen to the pitiable vocal efforts of victims of false doctrines and unspeakably bad methods, who have come to them for relief. Singularly enough, many such cases have been students who have been trained by singers of more or less ability and of some recognition as concert or opera singers. Teachers of this variety oftentimes depend upon their illustrations and the pupils' powers of imitation for success. They do not always know the causes of correct vocal form. Others have been pupils of musicians of well-known ability as conductors, organists, and pianists. Many of these teachers believe that there is nothing in particular to be known about the voice, that it is quite sufficient to be a musician, and that they are as well able to teach the art of singing as any one else. The law supports them in this belief by placing no restriction upon their operations and depredations.

Let us consider the *status quo* of the members of the vocal profession as compared with that of the legal and medical professions.

Before a man is privileged to practise as a doctor or a lawyer, he must know something about his subject—theoretically, at least. In the case of the physician, he must know something practically as well, and this condition is assured beyond a reasonable doubt before he receives his diploma and license as a practitioner.

To be sure, quack doctors and pettifogger lawyers are not anomalies, but in every case they must know more about their profession than the vocal teacher; for the vocal teacher is required to know absolutely nothing of his subject. The vocal teacher is a free lance, and is too often a musician who finds that he can make more money by teaching the voice than he can in any other way. The physical conditions are such as to render him immune from responsibility in the results of his efforts; likewise, such as to render judgment of his ability by the prospective pupil extremely difficult.

The man who would attempt to teach the piano, pipe organ, violin, or any other instrument, without knowing how to perform upon that instrument, is an unknown quantity, for obvious reasons. Nobody would become the pupil of such a teacher;

and if he did, his friends would be justified in placing him under restraint pending an examination as to his sanity. Not so the vocal student, and the reasons are equally obvious. Many of these—in fact, most of them—can sing a song, after a fashion, without being taught. Natural musical instinct keeps them in tune, and the voice moves to some extent automatically, as was intended by Nature. (Contemplation of this fact, by the way, is a powerful suggestion indicative of the correct initiative in vocal training.) Consequently, all that the student thinks he requires is criticism, and he will do the rest. The teacher has merely to listen, criticise, and suggest improvements, according to his judgment, from effects produced by the pupil. Now, if the teacher who is a musician, even providing that he realizes that he doesn't know much about the voice, would be content to officiate only as a listener and critic, the result would seldom be disastrous. The success of the pupil would depend upon the natural freedom of the voice in the necessary range of song, and his purely musical advancement, truly enough, should be naturally assisted by the musical suggestions of the teacher.

Such a teacher of singing should be known as a coach, and the average reputable coach has nothing to say about the vocal mechanism, nor does he attempt in any way to train the voice. The great evil is wrought by the inexperienced vocal teacher, who knows nothing about the voice psychologically nor physiologically, and has no skill in the use of devices for correcting faults. He pretends, however, to know, and frequently experiments with some particular hobby which he believes to be the best means of vocal development. Perhaps he has gleaned a smattering of knowledge from the perusal of some book, or from the ideas expressed by others in conversation; at any rate, he is at liberty to go ahead and assert himself, like Gilbert and Sullivan's "lady who never had danced, but she'd rather like to try." Let us consider for a moment the position of the pupil who is so often the dupe or victim.

This inoffensive person is wandering about undecided as to the selection of a teacher. He has heard that So-and-so is good, so he will try him. Forthwith he commences lessons. If the master is not a competent teacher of the voice, the throat of the student may gradually develop a stiff con-

dition under exercises, the range of which is too great for the voice, or from following out some instruction of the teacher as to a mode of production which is at variance with the laws of Nature. The master does not know, and it is not reasonable to suppose that the pupil will know, how to overcome the difficulty, at the end of his course of lessons.

Since singing is more psychological than physiological, and instruction in singing should be more psychological than physiological, it is a good thing for a singer, and a most necessary thing for a teacher, to understand the psychological phases of the subject. It is undoubtedly true that the mental attitude of the singer should be directed toward expressive utterance, rather than toward a consideration of the operation of the muscles involved in tone production.

Furthermore, there is great danger in attempting to develop the singing powers along physiological lines, especially if the attention of the student is directed separately to the various parts during respiration and phonation.

Coördination of the muscles can be depended

upon under properly-directed thought. The psychological phase is the one for the singer's consideration, as the physiological condition is the important consideration for the physician or operating surgeon.

Experience has taught this fact to all successful singers. Most of the great singers are not sufficiently posted on the physiological side of the question to argue the matter with physicians, physiologists, and scientists, and are quite content if they can please the public, keep their voices in good condition, and command their prices for appearances. This in itself does not argue that ignorance of the physiological side of the subject is a necessary condition of mind for the successful singer. I must, however, confess that circumstantial evidence in the cases that have come under my observation would point to the conclusion that those who know most about the voice physiologically sing the worst; while most of the learned writers who would uphold the physiological aspect of voice production make either ridiculous or positively excruciating noises in attempting to illustrate their points. It is, however, none the less

true that these same writers give valuable information on the physiological side of the question, in comparing singers who have come under their observation.

There are a few physiological facts that are impressed upon a singer at certain times which no doubt it would profit him to understand.

If the throat aches or becomes tired, or the voice becomes hoarse or brittle after singing a number of songs or vocalizing even for a reasonable length of time, there is a physiological condition present which demands a knowledge of the specific *cause* on the part of the vocalist. In the olden times the remedy was absolute rest of the voice. This much the old masters knew about the laws of Nature, and they doubtless thereby saved many a singer from premature vocal extinction. Modern science has evolved the knowledge of certain physiological facts pertaining to these and other undesirable vocal conditions, with which, if the teacher be acquainted, he can use to great advantage in his training. Such knowledge properly used, may be of great value in bringing about strength and elasticity.

The army of writers who have written according

to their lights disagree upon vital points. Scientists and self-styled scientists have written exhaustively.

Physiological and psychological treatises have appeared, setting forth plausible doctrines which, from the standpoint of the authors, would seem to settle forever much-mooted questions; but the conclusions are not always convincing!

Comparative theoretical analysis may serve some purpose in clearing the atmosphere, but the practical application of theory must be the means of determining its value to the student world. The field of theoretical conjecture was originally preempted by worthy and unworthy settlers, who battled right royally among themselves. They passed to their reward, and the cudgel was taken up by enthusiastic followers who have added their jots and tittles to the general fund of information—correct and incorrect. Many of these are still alive, and are followed by a greater or smaller army of adherents, who brandish their weapons of attack and defence and rally 'round their respective banners. Their universal war-cry is, "Accept this faith or ye perish." The ultimatum

is defiantly hurled at the constantly-growing army of possible recruits and interested spectators, and the battle goes on. In the vast conflict there is no unanimity of opinion, and among the theoretical hosts there possibly never will be. Thus the novitiate student finds himself at the threshold of a maelstrom. He plunges into the vortex, and sometimes he comes out alive vocally, but not always.

Keenness of perception and natural intuition play a large part in the fate of each candidate, but even these gifts are often powerless to save him in the face of wrong guidance, and few there be who drop noiselessly into the seething stream and float triumphantly to their longed-for goal. Too often they are overpowered by ineffective or ruinous methods; or, seeking to escape, are caught in the whirlpool of doubt and despair.

The wrecking of voices by incompetent vocal teachers, many of whom are sublimely unconscious of the damage they are working among their trusting victims, is going on at an alarming rate. This fact is well known among skilful vocal teachers, who are actually successful in their work.

In the meantime, whatever can be said or done

toward pointing out the danger signals and piloting the vocal mariners into the course of truth and right action will no doubt be acceptable to all.

The time is ripe for the standardizing of voice culture. The long-suffering musical public should be protected alike from charlatans and the blissfully ignorant pilots who have no chart or compass.

To those who are fully aroused to the situation as it exists, who are aware of the wretched systems of cultivating the voice along superficial and unnatural lines, who know of the existing chicanery—the flattery and blandishments showered upon unsuspecting victims in the interest of business—the condition is truly appalling. The world wags along, and the heartrending cries of the vocally lost, and the gnashing of teeth by the sojourners in vocal purgatory, are smothered by the hopeful shouts of the advancing army of beginners who expect to do better.

The picture, unfortunately, is not exaggerated or overdrawn. This may be superlative iconoclasm, but it is certainly high time that some of the idols should be destroyed.

The idolatrous worshipping of the " method " on

account of its difficulties and seeming unattainability should be brought to an abrupt end.

Pursuant of the statement that there is no unanimity of opinion among the theoretical writers, it is nevertheless gratifying to observe that there is a constantly-growing tendency toward common ground of agreement on vital points, manifested by those who have been through the refining fire of practical experience, and who are actually successful singers and vocal teachers.

Certain physiological and psychological truths are making themselves felt. False doctrines will no doubt, by process of gradual elimination, yield to the truth by virtue of their power to accomplish evil and their impotence to accomplish good in matters vocal.

It is a question of time and the survival of the fittest—both in theory and in the practical working-out.

Some teachers express the opinion that the reading of books upon the subject of voice culture and the art of singing does little, if any, good.

Indeed, it is stoutly maintained by many that the perusal of works upon the subject is worse than

useless, and oftentimes positively detrimental to the progress of the student. Such opinions are not without a show of good reason, because it is true that the variety of ideas and views expressed may well be considered as confusing to the uttermost degree. These ideals and views are diametrically and cross-sectionally opposed to each other in our array of vocal literature.

Duly-accredited authorities are at loggerheads; half-truths which conceal whole truths, and hence are more dangerous than untruths, are spread before the inexperienced student.

Is it any wonder, then, that under these conditions the student body should be advised not to read books on the subject, on the ground that such reading may result in a dangerous confusion of ideas?

However true this may be, the solution of vital problems can never be accomplished by closing the eyes and the ears, and refusing to exercise the powers of judgment, consideration, and analysis. To the earnest seeker after truth it is necessary to investigate; and, after all, to use a trite expression, "Every tub must stand on its own bottom."

It may be an open question as to the advisability of young students reading indiscriminately the works of various authors; but it is assuredly the imperative duty of vocal teachers to investigate truths and untruths which abound in the world of literature pertaining to their art; to separate so far as possible, the true from the false, and to advise as to such reading as may prove profitable to the student.

Into the vocal teacher's hand it is given to be a great power for good—or the reverse.

The responsibility is his to lead young singers aright. To do this, it is necessary to know the highways and the byways; the paths that lead to the summits, and the paths that do not.

The standardizing of voice culture as to fundamental principles is a crying necessity, but nevertheless the standardizing of tone from the viewpoint of imitating the sounds produced by certain artists, to the end that all singers should sound like these great singers, is not only physically impractical and impossible, but it also represents a sum-total distinctly undesirable in effect.

Physically taking into consideration the fibre

and construction, for instance, of Caruso's and Melba's vibrators (vocal cords) and surrounding laryngeal apparatus—the size, form, and construction of the resonators, chest, throat, and nasal cavities (all tone-characterizing factors to be reckoned with in any voice), to say nothing of the size and capacity of the lungs, windpipe, and respiratory muscles representing the motor power—it is hard to conceive of the possibility of making even similar tones with such a variety of conditions as a physical basis.

From this standpoint alone, I should as soon think of trying to make a piccolo sound like a flute, a violin like a viola or a bass viol, or a cornet like a trombone or a French horn; moreover, the constitutional difference in different singers, and the mental equipment as well as the mental attitude, must be considered.

The character of each voice is influenced to a very considerable extent by the mental as well as by the physical condition of the individual. Hence the interesting varieties of voices as well as the interesting varieties of faces.

No two voices sound alike, any more than two

faces look alike; nor do we wish to have them so. We don't want to walk down the street and see the same shaped nose and chin, the same color of eyes, the same complexion or expression on every face we meet; no more do we want to hear the same character of voice, which must needs be unnaturally and artificially produced. The logical conclusion as to the result of such working-out, granting that it should be successful, is that it would amount to insufferable monotony.

We wish to see cheerful, intelligent faces, radiant with health and the joy of right living, and hear musical, expressive voices in both speech and song; and to this end the standardizing of tone construction is desirable.

Analytically, the faults and defects in voices are pretty well known and have been scientifically explained, but this has not as yet served to produce a synthetical process corrective in effect of these same defects.

The tearing down and dissection have been to the satisfaction of all observers and close students of the subject, but not so the building-up or synthetic process. When this has been satisfactorily

accomplished, when unanimity of opinion shall be established regarding fundamental principles pertaining to construction, when cause and effect shall be understood in direct correlation, and universality of opinion and ideas concerning effect desired shall exist, then the musical forces of the world will commence to act in accord, and the wheels of the machinery for the much-to-be-desired standardizing of tone construction will be set in motion.

The standardizing of tone in effect is not, then, a desirable, any more than it is a practical or possible, culmination.

The delicate structure of the lyric tenor was never intended by Nature to sound like the dramatic, heroic tenor of Caruso, even under full normal development. The normal tone character of the dramatic soprano expressing any emotion is essentially different from the tone character of the lyric soprano expressing the same emotion.

Serious difficulties are encountered by artists who dare to ignore their physical limitation and attempt the impossible. The annals of history teem with records of vocal disasters of this kind.

Variety of effect, then, is a physical necessity,

as well as artistically desirable. This does not, however, antagonize the true fundamental principles involved in correct vocal development; nor does it antagonize the unquestionable desirability of unanimity of opinion arising from knowledge of facts in the physical phenomenon and the causes thereof.

THE RELATION OF PHYSIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY TO VOCAL ART

NOTWITHSTANDING this arraignment of certain views of the relation between physiology and vocal art, let it not be understood that the science of physiology has no bearing upon the physical operation of the voice in song and speech. On the contrary, the observations and conclusions of the physiologists have done a considerable amount of good to the vocal world. The evil which has been done has been chiefly on account of wrong consideration of its relation to the vocal art.

One important relation of physiology to vocal art is the observation of the phenomenon of voice-production with a view to its effect upon our physical welfare. For instance, as to abdominal breath-

ing, physiology points out that it is injurious to the physical welfare of the singer; frequently producing hernia, indigestion, and various other disorders of the system. Physiology points out the fact that the diaphragm is the most important muscle of inspiration, but is not a muscle of expiration. It thus exposes the ignorance of the pseudo-vocal scientist who instructs his pupils to control the breath at the diaphragm. Again, physiology proves clearly that the habit of tight lacing among women is distinctly injurious to the normal operation of the lungs and to the general health of the individual as well. These and similar considerations make the science of physiology an important factor in determining the course of truly scientific voice culture.

Physiology says to vocal science: "Do not build up a system which interferes with my laws—otherwise you are unscientific." And true vocal science, when born, says truthfully to physiology: "You are not my parent. You can tell me what I can and cannot do so far as it concerns you, but no more. I will observe your rights, but I warn you not to obtrude yourself into my domain. You are

my elder brother, but you are destined to be my servant and not my master."

True vocal science, then, acknowledges and respects the realm of physiology, but denies the usefulness of the science in construction as at present applied to vocal art. In distinction from physiology she declares for physical culture as a most important factor.

The human voice is the audible manifestation of soul and mind in the material world. The immediate material vehicle is made up of lungs, larynx, and resonance chambers of the body. Voice culture is the cultivation of the mind and the ear, aided by favorable physical activities, which consequently develops the physical parts involved.

Let us now consider the relation of the science of voice culture to the art of singing.

Science is knowing. Art is doing. "All scientific method in observation needs to be guarded in its employment, as all observation of phenomena is apt to encounter difficulties, and liable to engender mistakes," says George T. Ladd in his descriptive and explanatory psychology.

Nowhere have these mistakes been more in evi-

dence than in the vocal field. The science of physiology, given its proper place in the consideration of voice culture, would have been, and can yet be, a blessing instead of a curse to the vocal world.

Even those physiologists who admit the science of psychology as a valuable aid to the general scheme of construction, fail to grasp the seemingly hidden truth that psychological influences, mental conception, imagination, and strict attention to the end in view, instead of the physiological truths concerned in the process, should be the first consideration. Physiology enters merely as a corroborative witness to good results, and as a warning monitor in the event of possible violation of her laws—producing discomfort, or ill effect of any kind during or consequent upon the production of tones. When the singer is in normal, healthy condition, and harsh, ugly tones are in evidence, unaccompanied and not followed by any particular discomfort, physiology need not be referred to, appealed to, or consulted for relief—always excepting a condition which requires medical or surgical attention. The remedy lies wholly in musical conception, idealism, hearing, and ability to judge

correctly the sound of one's own voice, and a working knowledge of necessary physical activity.

In proportion to the singer's ability to hear and judge his own voice correctly is he able to beautify his tones, and not in any other way. Development of the singer's musical mind is of first importance. Musical perception, comprehension, and finally, musical judgment make for superlative ability.

"A well balanced mind," says Charles Lunn,[1] "is one in which the three factors, memory, understanding, and will, are approximately equally well developed." A retentive memory, a comprehensive understanding, and a well directed will-power are the attributes of a strong mind. A properly

[1] Charles Lunn reports the following: "In the *Month* for March, 1893, appeared the statement, 'Every advance which science has made in the various branches of knowledge, such as physiology, sound, dynamics, statics, etc., which in one way or another relates to the use of the vocal organs has only shown and proved with ever-increasing force, the truth of the rules of the old *Maestri*.'"

And, again, the *Medical Review*, writing on the subject some years ago, said, "Accurate analysis shows that the rules and practice of the old masters were nothing more than the (bringing about of) unconscious, almost instinctive realization of correct physical conditions in the vocal organ. Their system, therefore, is right, and the only one which can be accepted."

directed will-power is in distinction from mule-like, unreasoning stubbornness, which is rather a proof of weak understanding. The will is enlightened by understanding. In singing, the will-power can be used to stiffen the muscles, and also improperly directed may bring about involuntary stiffening of muscles—rigidity. The result is a harsh, unsympathetic voice, because elasticity is interfered with, or impeded in its proper action. The will-power should not be used to attempt to compel bodily functional processes. These act normally in response to effect sought. To attempt to control locally bodily functions, is to will cause instead of effect. It is misdirection of will, a direct violation of natural laws, and almost invariably results in effect which is not desirable or desired.

"There is in all living bodies a power called 'vital force,' of which we are conscious only by results. This vital force goes immediately to its end, instantaneously and directly in all action," but is not projected by will. If we will to move the end of a finger, we do not think along our wrist, although it is quite possible

to observe a muscular action in the wrist. This phenomena could be physiologically analyzed, but to what purpose? If you wish to crush a mosquito with the end of your finger, you must not stop to inquire what muscles you should use. You would will the effect, and the vital force would go quickly to its end. By any other process the mosquito would probably escape. Just so the voice gets away from you when for an instant you lose sight of the immediate effect in view, and attempt directly to guide and control the functional process. Spontaneity is checked, and the most desirable effect is never accomplished along these lines. So far as the physical parts are concerned, the larynx should take care of itself—neither held up nor down by direct conscious effort. The attempt to hold up the soft palate, or uvula, always results in local interference. Elasticity and flexibility are unbreakable laws where beautiful, expressive tones are concerned.

The value of the old school was in the teaching, which incidentally brought about correct adjustment of the parts involved. Empirical instruction, that is, instruction given in the light of obser-

vations of phenomena as they occurred, was the general method, if it can be so called.

"Sing on the breath," "Support the tone," and "Sing forward," did not mean to hurry, or to force the breath upward and outward, or to stiffen the body, or to drive the voice forward. "*Canta naturale, come si parla,*" meant to sing naturally, as you speak. "*Supportare la voce!*" meant to support the voice, that is, to keep it going and not to weaken. "*Fuori la voce,*" meant "Out with the voice." The combination could only mean, "let the voice pour out supported by the breath in natural exhalation." "*Appoggiare la voce in testa,*" and "*Appoggiare la voce sul petto,*" meant, "Lean the voice in the head or on the chest." "*Metter la voce piu in testa,*" or "*Piu sul petto,*" indicated and implied the idea of admixture and proportion in effect—tonal balance—and the old school accomplished the desired effect, barring impossible subjects. Note that the attention of the student was always directed to the voice, and not to the producing mechanism. The terms arose undoubtedly from the impression and consciousness of resonance in the head and chest. They are not

scientific terms, physiologically speaking, but the old and successful school was not one which took into consideration the science of physiology further than practically to avoid breaking its laws, and this it did more effectively than the modern schools, which are avowedly based on physiological principles.

"*L'Italiano non ha gola,*" means that the "Italian has no throat." Its import is that the Italian has no consciousness of physical effort in the throat while singing.

The empirical system of the old school was effective in obtaining good results, and had the old school been fortified and made impregnable by its reduction to scientific principles, instead of ignoring the true import of the meaning intended, all would have been well, and in all probability progress in the old art of singing would still have been uninterrupted. As it is, we have all been hopelessly confused and buffeted about by the introduction into our constructive workshop of a science, which, in its present application, strikes at the very life of normal healthy vocal activity and development.

Physiology and anatomy have nothing whatever to do with correct synthesis of voice production, except to define what can be done and what cannot be done without producing physically injurious results.

Illustrating the truth of this statement, by far the most important science, so far as usefulness to voice construction is concerned, is natural philosophy or psychology. This was the living principle of the old and successful school of singing, from the year 1600 to 1750 or thereabout; but the principles were not scientifically defined. Critically, it was somewhat weakened by calling attention to the process. "Sing on the breath,"[2] and

[2] For all practical purposes 1120 feet per second is the average rate at which sound travels in air, regardless of temperature. The breath of the singer merely sets the cords vibrating which in turn develop sound-waves—voice.

The doctrine of the conversion of breath into tone is, therefore, fallacious, a theory exploded by science. The idea of "singing on the breath" originated on account of the simultaneous impressions of sound, and breath in exhalation, experienced by the singer. Notwithstanding this ignorance of the sciences of physiology and acoustics on the part of the old masters, the development of voice and the act of singing flourished, which is a positive indication that knowledge of these sciences has little to do with the making of a singer.

"Open the throat," are not the strongest factors of the early empirical system of instruction. As a matter of fact, these two admonitions are scientifically alien factors and represent the weakness of the old school considered as a consistent theoretical structure. In a truly scientific school, attention should not be called to the breath in its natural process of producing tone, with a view to gaining conscious control of the breath. Nor should instruction be given to open the throat. The meaning is perfectly understood by experienced singers, but actually there is the danger of interfering with the normal operation of the breath, and exaggerated unnatural opening of the throat. That part of the throat which ought to open will do so much more satisfactorily under instruction to enunciate the vowel and pronounce the word freely, distinctly, and without restraint. Furthermore, in this manner there is no danger of degenerating into artificiality.

What is generally understood as scientific voice culture is mechanical guidance of the voice by paying attention to the physical parts involved, based on what is known of physiology and anatomy.

Differences of opinion about these matters have given rise to endless and useless discussions. As a consequence, the science of physiology, which really has the least to do with the art of singing, is made to masquerade as the chief bulwark of a so-called vocal science. The present vocal science is actually unscientific, and the term is a misnomer. True vocal science is known to the few, but it has not been properly christened. Those who pay too much attention to physiology often find themselves in as ludicrous a position as the man who, moved by patriotic fervor, came to weep at the tomb of Washington.

The guard approaching said to him "Friend, why weepest thou?"

"Sir," replied the patriot in mild rebuke, "this is the tomb of Washington."

"No," said the guard, "the tomb of Washington is over yonder. This is the ice house."

All that is necessary to restore voice culture to its ancient and successful platform is, first, to eliminate this destructive penchant for mechanical guidance and sycophantic bowing and scraping to physiology and anatomy, and then reduce the vital

principle of the old school to scientific, unmistakable terms, which will truly represent the real basis on which it formerly stood.

So-called vocal science has for its sponsor the science of physiology, and its offspring the mechanical schools of voice production. The principles on which it relies are destructive rather than constructive.

Physiology herself revolts at the distortion of truth in the principles of the mechanical schools, and shows her displeasure in the tired, aching, congested throats and strident, discordant tones of its votaries.

The principle which brought about the change from the command of voice (the end) to the command of the process of production, may be considered the destroying agent. In other words, the change from the psychological to the physiological basis as of primary consideration, and of first importance, I diagnose as the fatal change. Whatever decline the old school might have suffered is accounted for by the gradual growth and consequent preponderance of consideration for, and attention to, the process rather than the end—to

the physical vehicle of voice rather than the voice itself as appreciated by the ear.

This growth has been insidious, and the destroying germ has permeated the whole labyrinth of vocal art, like a cankerous worm or a destroying monster reaching out with octopus-like tentacles and withering the very soul of vocal life.

The proper study of voice is voice, and voice is the audible manifestation of the soul. Knowledge and appreciation of its source is the basis of true vocal science, and on true vocal science only can the art of singing securely rest.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL VIEWS OF VOCAL TRAINING

From the standpoint of the psychologist, it makes a very interesting proposition that we should entertain no consideration of the physiological aspect during vocal training.

From the standpoint of the physiologist, an equally interesting but distinctly less acceptable proposition is that we have to deal mainly with the physiology of the voice during the voice training period. Curiously enough, it seems to have been

overlooked that while we retain our mental faculties, mind and body are indissolubly united.

Now, having taken cognizance of this evident oversight on the part of some contending partisans, we should remind ourselves that the *supremacy* of mind over matter is a well-established scientific truth. Psychology is the science of the facts or states of consciousness as such, and thus of the self or mind. The things which psychology studies are attention, perception, thought, memory, feeling, imagination, planning and choosing—discrimination—and the exercise of the will power.

Psychology as applied to the art of singing includes a sense of physical activities, as well as divine idealism and conception. It is the first factor for consideration in training the voice, because mental conception of some kind should always precede execution. In learning to sing, if the consideration of the physiological condition is made the chief object, the real goal of artistic expression is entirely overlooked; or, at least, a serious—yes, an almost impassable barrier to artistic success has been erected. If, on the other hand, the consideration of soulful or even intelligent expression is

made the chief object, the chances are much more favorable to success. Certain physiological conditions are necessary, but such conditions are purely resultant. The chief consideration should be to bear in mind that in order to produce the best results, it is necessary for the singer to be in a healthy condition, so that the functional processes will act normally under proper guidance.

The strength, comprehensiveness, and quality of thought regarding effect desired preceding the physical action, determines in the largest degree the success of that action. This is in the natural order of things in general, and should be recognized in particular by teachers and singers alike, in practical voice training. The vocal mechanism develops naturally under sane, healthy vocal exercise, guided by the ear and the musical sense. The realization of mechanical ease in delivery should be ever present.

If this mechanical ease in delivery does not accompany the conception of correct tone, it may be safely assumed that the ear needs training. Beautiful tone and mechanical ease in tone-production are inseparable. In the art of singing, as in

all other arts, the leading influence is the mental conception. Following the action is the judgment of effect which is the discriminating monitor.

Analytically, under correct conditions, the material vehicle—the mechanism of the voice—involuntarily adjusts itself automatically to the requirement of the preconceived desired effect.

The blunderings of the ambitious physiologists who are not singers, and who contend that the attention to the development and direct control of certain muscles or sets of muscles—which are, in fact, in operation during the execution of song—is all-sufficient, originate in a lack of understanding of the psychological phase of the matter. Good vocalists are seldom found among people who entertain such views.

For a singer, first of all, musical talent is an absolute necessity. "*Voce, voce, voce,*" is not all-sufficient. The amount of musical talent necessary to success depends upon its relation to the amount and distribution of talent and development in other contemporaneous singers. Hence the standard of musical development and vocal equipment necessary to success is variable.

It must be remembered that musical talent is subject to the same possibility, only to a very much greater extent. The development of the parts involved, aided by certain physical considerations, can always be depended upon to follow the development of musical appreciation.

Physical development of the vocal apparatus is very largely coincident with, and a natural consequence of, vocal training, which must primarily be directed along the lines of musical conception.

Analytically, vocal sounds are produced by the vocal cords stretched by the *insensible* influence of the will. The breath passes up through the space between the vocal cords called the glottis. The action of the breath sets in vibration the vocal cords. The sound waves produced by these vibrations, are augmented by the resonance cavities of nose, throat and mouth.[3] The compound sound consisting of fundamental and overtones represents the individual voice which may be musical or other-

[3] The shock of the glottis is a term which has been used by scientists to indicate the initial action of the breath upon the vocal cords. This term has been appropriated by vocal teachers with harmful effects, as too much violence and force is usually applied as a consequence of the suggestion.

wise, primarily depending upon the regularity of vibrations. Pitch is determined by the length, thickness, tension and rapidity of vibration of the vocal cords. Volume depends largely upon the quantity of air which goes through the larynx in a given time, influencing the amplitude of vibrations of the cords. The loudness or intensity of sound as explained by Dr. Brewer, the eminent authority on acoustics, "is proportionate to the force of the shock the air receives, the density of the medium through which the sound waves pass, the uniformity of that medium, the absence of obstacles to interrupt the progress of the sound waves and the proximity of the auditor to the original source of sound. The character of sound is largely determined by the form, magnitude and density of the sounding body, the method by which it is executed and the comparative force of the power by which it is set in motion."

Individuality of tone in any voice is due to the fact that all sounds practically are compound, not simple sounds. The quality and character of the vocal sounds depend upon the number and intensity of their components. The vibration of the

cords, both full length and in segments producing fundamental and partial or over tones, develops tone waves amplified by the resonance cavities. The greatest influence upon tone individuality, however, is the mind and mental attitude of the singer. It is undoubtedly true as Dr. Brewer states, that "the force of the voice is increased by opening the mouth, flattening the tongue, causing the *velum palati* at the back of the mouth to contract, thus making the passage larger"—but the most significant statement as effecting the singer is, that all these conditions are either dependent on the will (direct control), or subject to guiding emotions, or influenced by passing ideas, through the operation of automatic changes. "Man can lower his voice at one moment into a whisper, elevate it at another into a yell, pour into it the fervor of passion and declamation, or modulate it into the medium tone of social intercourse and general conversation." Direct control represents the mechanical school and should receive no consideration from singers, as it leads to anything but the means of artistic expression. The action of the vocal muscles and acoustic conditions, can be analyzed by scientists

until doomsday without coming one whit nearer the solution of the problem of correct synthesis in vocal development, until the psychological phase of the matter is given the first consideration.

The training of the singing voice, as well as the training of the speaking voice, we find, is best accomplished under the general laws of psychological control. The muscular operations are subject to physiological and anatomical analysis; but, under the same law that the sense of sight directs any action of the hand or foot in bringing about any desired result, the sense of hearing, if properly exercised, directs the physical operations of the vocal organs. Attentively listening to one's own voice promotes the development of the correct muscles for the production of the sounds which agree with our mental conception and judgment of what is correct in effect. In forming this judgment, the singer is in a very large degree dependent upon the musical judgment of some other person or persons, for the reason that his voice does not sound to himself as it does to others. The individual cannot at first be the sole judge of the comparative beauty of the quality or intensity

of his own tones, unaided by some other person, be he ever so expert as a tone critic, because in the very nature of the condition he is not in a position to hear his own voice as others hear it. However, assuming that the singer has fine musical perception and judgment of vocal sounds produced by others, he is in much better position to develop rapidly than the individual whose musical perceptions and judgment are inferior, either from lack of intuitive ability or acquired competency; because, his attention being directed to what is good, better or best in his voice, he is better able to control his own vocal utterances than a person of inferior musical ability. In fact, almost any good musician can readily learn to sing well and to produce beautiful tones. In cases where what is known as beautiful voice exists naturally, the act of singing is easily acquired, provided that the attention of the singer is directed to the excellence, as well as to the shortcomings of his own natural production. The physical conditions are favorable to good tones, and the skill of singing is easily acquired by the *canto figurato*, *i.e.*, different musical figures or vocal exercises which are favorable

to the acquiring of facility in singing. Practice is all that is necessary, guided by the attention of one's self to one's own voice. The work of the vocal teacher in such cases is comparatively easy. Attention to proper inspiration, and the correct physical poise and mental attitude of the singer, are all that is necessary. In cases when what is known as natural beautiful voice does not exist, the development calls for the expert guidance of the competent vocal teacher. It is my firm conviction, resulting from many years of experience in training voices, that almost anyone possessing musical talent can develop a fine voice and acquire the art of singing. The inherent desire of the musical soul to express itself through the medium of the voice, aided by the knowledge in the possession of every expert vocal teacher, makes it entirely within the range of reasonable possibility. It is true that the so-called making of voice calls in many instances for the exercise of great patience, perseverance, and indomitable will on the part of both teacher and pupil; but when the desire to accomplish is sufficient, coupled with steadfastness of purpose, the end can never be in doubt.

It is entirely probable that the majority of the more advanced thinkers to-day are those who believe in a general way that the true basic principle underlying the singer's art is psycho rather than physico, but who doubt the efficacy of the first alone to accomplish the best ends. There has been a gradual change of opinion during the past quarter of a century, and particularly during the past decade, regarding the physiological phase of the matter, due largely to the result of teaching along the lines of what may be termed local action or the mechanical school; that is, giving primary attention to the physical parts involved, and willing the process rather than the end. The result of such investigation and teaching has everywhere proved unsatisfactory except in isolated cases. These exceptions may be said to have proven the rule. It is an open question, however, whether the few singers representing such methods have not made their mark in spite of their accepted theories, and whether they would not be better artists if their ideas about mechanical guidance were laid aside. The art of singing is the art of self-expression. The art of mechanical guidance of the vocal

mechanism is not. This latter art, nevertheless, has been very generally acquired during the age of retrogression. The decline of the vocal art from the high standard of the golden age is a fact and a matter of history. Those who have passed a number of years in the great musical centres of the world, and have observed and taken part in the ambitious struggle for vocal supremacy, know that general failure has crowned the efforts of the vast majority of the participants. These have failed to reach the goal of moderate success, not through the lack of musical ability nor the lack of a naturally good organ of sound, but to a very large extent through the inadequacy of present-day methods of training.

Leaving aside the instances, by no means uncommon, of voices which have been hopelessly ruined during the process of cultivation, we have for consideration the alarming number of voices which have become harsh, hard, and inexpressive as a result of vocal training, both in Europe and America. There is no reason for any voice to become harsh and discordant during the training period, if guided by skilful instructors, who are

not benighted and befuddled by popular fallacies regarding voice culture. Theories and practice in the course of vocal training must be harmonious. The one must not belie the other, if systems are to become reliable. Empirical and scientific instruction should not clash. If empirical instruction brings favorable results, it should be reduced to scientific principles in order that it may become a rock of vocal ages.

Inasmuch as the art of song is an art of vocal expression of human ideas, emotional and otherwise, the first care must assuredly be, not to depart from a line of practical procedure which has constantly in view this most important fact. Ideally, singing is musical vocal expression, and the criticism of singing to-day, generally speaking, is that it is not this. It is something quite foreign. It has degenerated into attempts to make tones in accordance with some method for inducing quantity, resulting for the most part in noises loud and strident.

Seemingly, it matters not whether high notes are agreeable and expressive so long as they are in tune and powerful. Screeching, strained, fear-

stricken high notes are tolerated and even applauded by a public which has learned to expect these things, because it is of common occurrence to receive such offerings from public singers. Of course the "dear public" is conscious of the difference when here and there a bright star rises in the vocal firmament and sings the music without inflicting the soul-harrowing noises upon it. And so idealism is not destroyed, and certain standards of vocal excellence remain. The few truly vocal artists are living examples of what is possible. Popularly, it is supposed that these most acceptable exponents of the art of singing were endowed with very exceptional voices and talents not the gifts of their less fortunate confrères. In a sense this is true, but not to the extent of general supposition. Almost all the shining lights of opera, oratorio, and song recitals have been for years persistent and painstaking students of their art. Long and endless devotion has been the price of genuine, lasting success—often in cases where superior natural vocal *mezzi* was wanting. The attributes of patience, perseverance, and self-denial in the matter of indulgence in habits which less serious stu-

dents often acquire, has been not the least important factor in the accounting.

On the other hand, many aspirants who can justly claim the virtues of the serious student of song arrive at no practical realization of their dreams, and the cause of such failure does not seem to be apparent. Given musical knowledge, intelligence, and the quick feeling and appreciation known as temperament, the conscientious student possessing a good voice should succeed to some appreciable degree. An explanation is at hand. In exactly the degree to which the attention to the detail of the physical process of tone-formation in modern voice culture overshadows the natural tendency to express one's ideals normally, to such degree are successful results jeopardized or made impossible. This is entirely irrespective of the particular dogma used in the vocal training. Inherent common-sense frequently asserts itself, and false doctrines are not always able entirely to upset the instinctive and subconscious promptings of nature. In such event, the student may be said to succeed in spite of avowedly accepted doctrines.

The strangest part of it all is that credit for

success is frequently given to doctrines which might have caused dire distress and hopeless inefficiency.

Take, for instance, the popular doctrine of breath control. If the control of the tone is actually governed by the ear, and results are satisfactory to the vocal teacher in charge of the case, the student may escape the penalty of wrong muscular development which would naturally occur under the false idea of actual direct breath control. Frequently, Nature asserts herself and satisfying results occur, which for the time being avert an impending catastrophe. The wrong principle in instruction sometimes happily fails to take root, as the assassin's bullet goes wide of the mark.

The singer goes on, possibly handicapped by the entertaining of ideas which do not make for best results, but which are, happily, not sufficiently well applied to compass a complete downfall. A particularly strong, finely bred horse will sometimes win a race, though outrageously overweighted.

So much for the contemplation of conditions as weighed in the balance and found wanting, or otherwise. The purpose of all intelligent seekers after truth is to discover, if possible, the size and char-

acter of adverse influences as well as influences which promote normal, healthy, and desirable conditions. The evidence that psychology was the fundamental though unfortunately unnamed principle of the old school, may be termed circumstantial; negatively proven by the absence of any other principle in the records of instruction as found in the works of early writings, and positively proven by traditional precepts as handed down by word of mouth and reduced to this scientific principle. The physiological idea of the present-day historians and conjectural writers indicates that they have arrived at the conclusion that there is a missing link somewhere. Something must have been lost, according to their way of thinking, because the old masters did not tell you what to do. There is nothing in their literature to show that they did something with the physical parts involved. The logical conclusion is that either they did not record this Something which they did or counselled to be done (and, if so, something has indeed been lost), or else that they never did anything directly and purposefully with these very parts. The latter conclusion offers the most tenable ground for future

discussion, and in the author's opinion represents the actual state of the case. Granting this to be a correct deduction, there is no difficulty in resurrecting the lost vocal art.

Analytically, the size, form, and adjustment of the organ of sound is different in every individual voice, at any given pitch.

The quality is dependent not only on physical environment, but on the soulful animus, the creative faculty in the imagination; in short, the condition of the mind. The physical condition of rigidity or flexible firmness of the physical parts involved is largely resultant upon the influence of mental conditions. This leads us to the consideration of the important fundamental factor of idealism, mental conception, or imagination.

If in the psychological phase of the matter the direction of the ideas is toward the control of the material part of the voice, we have clipped the wings of vocal possibilities. The voice normally expresses pain, pleasure, joy, sorrow, exultation, longing, satisfaction, pity, disdain and all soulful emotions. The voice is the vehicle of expression and the strength or weakness of the imagination

is a most important factor as influencing the strength or weakness of soul-expression. From the physiological standpoint, certain muscles respond, and under well defined laws of development grow and increase in their physical ability. The observation of nature's way of doing things has thrown us off the scent, so to speak. We have lost sight of the fact that the will-power, prompted by the imagination, must be directed to the end sought and not to the process of the physical vocal phenomenon as it is observed to occur, or as it is supposed to occur.

Here is the parting of the ways. The consideration of the physical process with the idea of directly controlling that process, basing our right to do so upon the fact that certain physiological conditions are in evidence during the phonation of certain sounds, is the crying evil of the day. It represents the rocks and shoals upon which most of the vocal ships have foundered and gone to the bottom. It represents the superfluous and unnecessary handicap under which many a partially disabled vocal ship is sailing. It is the much-to-be-dreaded vocal Nemesis of the present day.

Complete vocal-emancipation will come when

the truth is borne in upon all singers that the physical obeys the mental conception, if the will is exerted to the accomplishment of the desired end. There are of course physical limitations, but these need not be anticipated or prematurely considered. They make themselves known soon enough, and when they do it is time enough to regulate your vocal conduct so as not to offend Dame Nature.

The leavening manna of common-sense will prevent many a serious blunder. If common-sense reigns, no basso profundo will attempt to sing a high soprano rôle in opera. Less obvious violations of nature's laws can also be avoided by just exercising common-sense.

The consideration of favorable physical conditions to beautiful expressive tonal emission must not be confounded with physiological considerations. There is a distinction and a difference which are highly important in the practical working-out. Allowing the mind to wander or compelling the mind to take cognizance of and dwell upon the phenomenon as it occurs detracts from the success of the undertaking; principally because it is found to be practically impossible to express any human

emotion with soulful interest and at the same time to be busily engaged in attempting mechanically to adjust the physical parts involved. Such proceedings are contrary to the obvious law of vocal expression in song. The mechanism of the voice develops strength and general physical ability in response to the mental conception or the musical end in view, aided by physical conditions which are found to be favorable and which require only a very minor consideration. Attention to detail in the physical phenomenon is embarrassing, superfluous and unnecessary. It detracts from the main purpose, and if carried to extremes, as is frequently the case, is not only subversive, but actually renders impossible the accomplishment of the desired end.

The psycho-physico process represents the natural line of vocal development—not the psycho-physiological or anatomical. To argue that the instrument must first be put in order before it is played upon, is to advance an argument utterly fallacious, because it presupposes that the vocal instrument bears the same relation to the performer as does the violin or piano, which is not the case. This idea, which at first thought may seem plau-

sible enough, has been found upon investigation to be erroneous. The strings of the violin or piano cannot by any possibility respond to the will or desire of the artist, without being first set up or prepared by a strictly mechanical operation. These instruments are not a part of the living being. In distinction from all other instruments, the human voice occupies the unique position of being a part of the living being, and under well-known psychological laws is or may become attuned to any condition without special direct mechanical aid. The skill of handling the vehicle of sound in the case of any instrument, other than the human voice, can be developed without any particular regard for the wear and tear upon the instrument in practice. The instrument worn out can be replaced by another as good or better than the old one. Not so the human voice. The imaginary necessity of treating the voice as a mechanical instrument, before using it as the means of artistic expression, has caused the ruin of many a voice and seriously handicapped many more.

Voices developed under the principles which recognize the fact that physiological adjustment

is a natural consequence of practice following the correct idealization, are the ones that are being trained according to truly scientific principles.

A knowledge of the physical medium of voice is not only interesting, but is instructive and desirable for analytical reasons.

From physiologists we learn that the larynx contains the vocal cords, the vibrators of the vocal instrument. In order to sing evenly, smoothly, and effectively, it is absolutely necessary that all thought of holding the larynx up or down, or fixed in any position, be abandoned. During the phonation of a tone on any given vowel at any given pitch, the larynx remains firm in one position. In changing pitch the larynx may change its position, but never should be compelled to do so by the will of the singer. This is one of the things that Nature insists upon doing for herself, without wilful interference. Involuntary interference may result from several causes, and here is where the skill or lack of skill in singers and teachers becomes manifest in correcting such interference. *Suitable vocal and physical exercises to bring about healthy elasticity of the muscles involved are what is required, and*

the judgment of the ear, combined with the consciousness of physical ease, is the final court of appeal.

It matters not whether the cords are at one angle or another, whether they are long or short, thick or thin, tense or otherwise, or how they approximate; these are not questions for consideration in the synthesis of voice.

Physiologists tell us that between the true and the false vocal cords or bands are two sacs on either side, capable of inflation and expansion by air, known as the ventricles of Morgagni. It is a problem of physiology, and whatever influence they may have upon sound is a question involving the science of acoustics, very interesting to know about and to discuss, but having no bearing upon the problem of the synthesis of voice production. Analytically, it is most interesting and instructive to read about what muscles and cartilages are in use during the act of singing, and to understand the physiology of the vocal organ. For information regarding these things read any authority on physiology and anatomy. The works of Dr. Holbrook Curtis, and Professor Wesley Mills, of Mc-

Gill University, are particularly interesting. Among other things, Professor Mills says: "In singing and speaking, the larynx should be steadied, otherwise the 'attack,' or application of the air blast to the vocal bands, cannot be perfect." If the phraseology had been "the larynx should be steady" instead of "the larynx should be steadied," there would be no objection to the statement. As it is, it does not agree with the principles of voice culture as set forth in this work. Furthermore, the action of the mechanism of the larynx should be automatic, and not be subject to direct control.

History records that in the year 1854 the celebrated teacher, Manuel Garcia, invented the laryngoscope, now in general use among physicians. It consists of two mirrors, one fastened to the forehead by a band placed around the head, and the other a small mirror which, when introduced into the mouth at the back of the throat, is so held as to secure the reflection of light from the mirror at the forehead, which in turn is generally illuminated by a lamp. The purpose of the laryngoscope was to observe the larynx during

actual phonation—something that had never been accomplished up to that time.

The laryngoscope, with all its value to the physician and to the analytical physiologist, is of no practical value to the vocal teacher, except to determine the physical condition of the larynx and vocal cords by being able to view them.

Dr. Fillebrown of Harvard says: "As a surgeon, I well know the value of thorough anatomical knowledge, but from the singer's standpoint I cannot too strongly emphasize the unwisdom of directing the attention of sensitively organized pupils to their vocal mechanism by means of the laryngoscope. This instrument belongs to the physician, not to the singer."

Dr. Fillebrown says further:

"By the testimony of Garcia's biographer, M. S. McKinley, and of the distinguished English baritone, Sir Charles Santley, who was a pupil of Garcia, it is authoritatively known that Garcia modified his first claims as to the value of the laryngoscope in voice culture. Mr. Santley says in his 'Art of Singing': 'In all my conversations I had with him I never heard him say a word about

larynx or pharynx, glottis, or any other organ used in the production and emission of the voice.' This does not agree with the principles of voice culture as set forth by Garcia in his work, but a reasonable conjecture may be that Garcia changed his principles in practical voice training after reaching his final conclusion as to the value of the laryngoscope."

Dr. Morell MacKenzie, the illustrious surgeon and throat-specialist of London, says: "It can scarcely be said to have thrown any new light on the mechanism of the voice," and Dr. Lennox Brown says: "Valuable as has been the laryngoscope in a physiological way, as undoubtedly it is in a medical sense, it has been the means of making all theories of voice production too dependent on the vocal cords, and thus the importance of the other parts of the vocal apparatus has been overlooked."

The principal factor in bringing about correct coördination of the parts involved is the breathing.

BREATHING AND BREATH CONTROL

Theoretical and Practical

As correct breathing is such an immense power

for good, not only as a factor in the emission of artistic tone, but as an ever-present influence in the conservation of health, it is most important that the student should have at the very outset a thorough understanding of this most important subject. The major fallacies regarding the breathing apparatus are resultant for the most part upon the misapprehension of proper direction of the will-power.

In reviewing the history of vocal art we find that many plausible theories concerning the management of the breath have not only failed in the practical application to bring about desirable artistic results, but have been fruitful of much physical as well as artistic evil. It is interesting to read the opinions of the learned scientists on this subject, and I will briefly quote from the works of a number of authors who have received public recognition. The false deduction of voiceless corpses that never sang, as Mr. Charles Lunn remarks, are worse than valueless as affecting the truth in matters of voice construction. Again quoting Sir Morell MacKenzie on the subject of controlling the breath from the diaphragm: "The old Italian

masters taught that in inspiration the anterior abdominal wall should be slightly drawn in, and this method was practised for more than a hundred and fifty years; but in 1855 Mandl opposed this mode of breathing on anatomical grounds, maintaining that the descent of the diaphragm is facilitated by allowing the abdominal wall to be flaccid and to project forward in inspiration. In England the views of Mandl have been advocated by Messrs. Brown and Behnke, and I was myself inclined to accept these doctrines. I felt some misgivings, however, on the subject, more especially as Gottfried Weber, one of the most acute investigators who had studied the science of singing, says that it is impossible to say why it is so, but that undoubtedly the old Italian method is the best. I endeavored to harmonize the conflicting views, but further investigation of the subject has convinced me that the old Italian *Maestri* were right, and that in the abdominal cavity there is ample room for the slight descent of the diaphragm without any protrusion of its anterior walls. By the old Italian method complete control is obtained at the commencement of the act of expiration, and undue escape of air—

i.e., waste of breath—is thus prevented. In other words, by the Italian system greater effect is produced with less expenditure of force."

Sir Morell MacKenzie's reference to the old Italian method is an analytical observation of physical conditions which he considers to be physiologically most favorable to the best voice-production. These conditions, instead of representing a purposeful effort on the part of singers to bring about these results, are found to be purely and naturally consequential, and to represent the most natural and normal physical condition in singing.

Says Dr. Harry Campbell, in his "Respiratory Exercises in the Treatment of Diseases" (1898): "If a full pancostal inspiration be taken after a complete expiration, no more air, or at all events only a small quantity, can be inhaled by means of the diaphragm. This at once disposes of the view held by some teachers of singing that more air can be taken in by a diaphragmatic breath then by the purely costal method. Further proof of the fallacy of this teaching is supplied by the spirometer."

Mr. Charles Lunn, in his "Philosophy of the

Voice" (1906), says: "There is one word I should like to eliminate from the teacher's vocabulary, and that is 'diaphragmatic,' for it is used in *two* senses: one meaning a descent on the intestines, pushing the bowels out; the other meaning an expansion of the free ribs pushing these ribs apart. (1) Clavicular breathing in a standing biped is an upward perpendicular force; is ugly, but a singer can sing, in degree, with this method. (2) Abdominal breathing in a standing biped is a downward perpendicular force, and is not only ugly, but atrocious, for a person can never sing with this. (3) Costal or artistic breathing in a biped standing upright is a horizontal force, acting at a right angle to a vertical line." Dr. Campbell's ideas concerning breathing are directly opposed to the Mandl School, practically overthrowing it, as shown by the following: "Abdominal breathing is closely associated with the name of Mandl, who in 1855 advocated this mode of breathing—in an article which appeared in the *Gazett Medicale*—though it had already been largely practised. He obtained a wide following, and in schools of singing most strange devices were resorted to for the

purpose of fixing the ribs and compelling pure abdominal breathing; thus the pupils were made to sing while lying down on mattresses, sometimes with weights more or less heavy placed on the sternal regions. Masters were even said to make a practice of seating themselves familiarly upon the chests of their pupils. In the schools were to be seen gallows with thongs and rings for binding the upper half of the body, orthopædic apparatus, rigid corsets, and a kind of pillory, which enclosed the frame and fixed the ribs." (Quoted from Joals' "Respiration in Singers.")

"All sorts of troubles may result from abdominal breathing, such as hernias, indigestions, and disorders of the abdominal circulation, etc."

Corroborating this testimony, Dr. Rennie in his work, "The Art of Improving the Voice and Ear" (1825), says: "From stretching all the parts of the abdomen till some of them give way, a rupture, or hernia, is the consequence, as was observed long ago by the celebrated Fallopius. Dr. Ramazzini often found rupture produced in a way precisely similar in children, who, by exerting their voices in crying, overstretched and burst the muscles of the belly."

In Dr. Lardner's "Animal Physics" we find a clear explanation of the action of the ribs during the most approved manner of respiration as practised by the most successful singers of the present day.

Dr. Lardner writes: "In the state of repose which follows an expiration, the capacity of the chest being reduced to its least limit, each pair of ribs is inclined downward and forward, and the sternum (breast bone) is depressed. To enlarge the chest during an inspiration, each pair is drawn up to the horizontal position, and at the same time the sternum is elevated and protruded forwards. This movement produces an enlargement of the thorax (chest) by two of its dimensions: firstly, by its increased depth from the sternum to the vertebral column (backbone), and, secondly, by its increased width from side to side."

Dr. H. Holbrook Curtis says: "We were long since convinced that the inferior costal breathing was the proper method of respiration for singers and voice users. But it seemed to us that the act might be made more general, more complete, by adding to it the superior costal elevation."

Dr. Curtis calls this mode of breathing the *fixed high chest method.* He points out the fact that practically all authorities are agreed about the correct condition of the abdominal wall in inspiration, the debated question being the extent to which it should be retracted.

In reading the reports of scientific observers, the mind of the student often becomes confused, chiefly on account of the failure to realize that the observative or analytical is not the viewpoint which should be taken by the student in the synthetic process. Such analysis is merely corroborative, and is valuable to the scientist only from a physiological standpoint.

The student must remember that he is not singing or learning to sing with the object of bringing about any particular physiological condition. It is merely interesting to know that certain physiological conditions may be observed as accompaniments or consequences of certain physical movements, resulting from the proper direction of willpower.

In Stephen's Commentaries on Social Economy appears the following: " There are professions pro-

ductive of evils so serious, when improperly exercised, and so liable at the same time to be exercised by unfit persons, as to make it proper to subject them to the restraints of legal regulation." Referring to this quotation, Mr. Charles Lunn says: "That the science and art of voice training is included in this category, is easily shown; in fact, the evidence of evil is overwhelming, and is constantly on the increase, owing to the pseudo-science that prevails and the unchecked interference of unqualified persons."

Dr. Fillebrown, of Harvard, explains the vocal phenomena as follows: "There are two sets of respiratory muscles: one set for inspiration and the other for expiration—twenty-two or more in all. The diaphragm, and the intercostal muscles that lift the ribs, are the chief muscles of inspiration. Four sets of abdominal muscles, together with the intercostal muscles that depress the ribs, constitute the muscles of expiration. The diaphragm is not a muscle of expiration.

"Expiration depends mostly on other muscles. The abdominal muscles relax during inspiration, and the diaphragm relaxes during expiration. The

muscles of expiration are the stronger of the two. This is what is needed; for the breath while speaking or singing must go out under greater tension than is necessary for inhalation."

All voices are subject to the same general laws of development. The lungs and respiratory muscles act as the physical motor-power, the vocal cords act as a vibrator, the mouth, throat, nose and head and chest cavities act as a resonator, and the tongue and lips act as the articulator.

The development of the vehicle of voice consists in the harmonious action of these four elements. The breath properly taken by free expansion of the lungs creates in exhalation a current of air which passes through the wind-pipe and larynx, or voice-box containing the vocal cords—the vibrator. At this point the current of air produces the tone which we will speak of as fundamental tone. The vibrating air or tone passing on into the mouth is reinforced by the hard palate and the cavities of the nose and head—the resonator. Additionally, we have the sympathetic resonator, *i.e.*, the chest, and, in fact, the entire body.

Let the student of voice remember that all con-

sideration as to the physiological conditions during phonation is superfluous, as in the practical synthesis of voice production the important things to be considered by the student are the initiative and the result. In my observation I find a great misapprehension of the correct mode of procedure in the natural development of the voice.

Breath control, in principle, means to many singers a wilful, direct and voluntary holding-back of the breath during phonation, for the purpose of economizing the supply of breath. Broadly, this is the result of the teachings of the local effort school, in which the pupil—or, in this case, the victim—is led to believe that by holding back or pushing the breath he is correctly exercising the function of breathing.

Alas for the victims! Nothing could be more subversive of the truth. No man or woman can wilfully hold back or push the breath, and at the same time sing with spontaneity, naturalness, or soulful expression.

In short, the thing is incompatible with good singing.

To analyze a phenomenon of nature and find

certain things about it to be true in effect, does not determine the best means of bringing about the condition thus analyzed; and it is owing to a general misapprehension of the natural laws of cause and effect that the wrong initiative is taken, attended by imperfect and oftentimes disastrous results.

As in a geometrical proposition, if the procedure of investigation is based upon a false hypothesis, the conclusions are necessarily incorrect.

Now, assuming that the high chest and slightly drawn in abdomen is the correct condition for a singer in the act of inspiration, and the high chest and further drawn in abdomen is the correct one in expiration, we have a still more important matter for practical consideration.

There still exists the possibility of true or false premises, and hence true or false conclusions, as the case may be.

This liability to error and false conclusion in the practical working-out of the problem lies first in the mental initiative. By this is meant the first thought and the first voluntary physical action.

If these are correct, the consequent involuntary

action will occur, and the result will be correct, unless there are existing conditions of abnormal activity of the interfering or extrinsic muscles. When the singer has solved the problem of correct mental initiative and voluntary action, and the ear has been educated to appreciation of the sounds resulting therefrom, he is on comparatively safe ground. When there is an involuntary stiffening and hardening of the extrinsic muscles of the throat or face, or hardening of the muscles of the abdomen or diaphragm, special treatment is required—depending upon the nature of the particular case. We will proceed with the assumption that the high chest and slightly drawn in abdomen is the correct position in the act of inspiration.

If the chest be elevated and the abdomen drawn in voluntarily, and breath taken through mouth or nose voluntarily, and in expiration the chest be held up and the abdomen drawn in still more, and the breath held back voluntarily, we should have what might be termed a strict following out of the rule of direct muscular control.

It has been a purely voluntary mechanical proceeding all the way through, and results may be

totally unsatisfactory. Again, we may raise the chest and draw in the abdomen slightly by means of simply standing erect; or, rather, if we stand erect, we may find that the chest is high and the abdomen slightly drawn in; furthermore, we may find that we already have sufficient breath on which to sing without having given a single thought to raising the chest, drawing in the abdomen, or taking the breath!

If we continue to stand erect while singing, we may find that the chest remains high; that the abdomen sinks in still more, naturally and involuntarily, as we proceed, and that we are singing without any thought of holding back the breath. In both cases we find by analysis of conditions that we have observed theoretical requirements, but with vastly different results, both tonal and physical.

The first method is incorrect, because it interferes with natural spontaneity, and the results will show conditions of sound which will not appeal to the correctly trained ear. There are other conditions which actually exist in correct tone production, but the above example illustrates the principle of automatic breath control.

This is primarily a matter of the physical cultivation of the breathing muscles and the development of the lungs, and is best accomplished by exercises which will practically bring about the desired results. These are, the ability to sustain phrases evenly at any degree of power within the natural range, to crescendo and diminuendo, and to color the tones at will, without directly attempting to govern the muscles involved.

Authorities disagree as to the mode of procedure in this cultivation and development. Some contend that breathing exercises should be used without phonation, while others insist this is unnecessary.

There can be no harm, and undoubtedly a beneficial result will be gained in many cases, by breathing exercises without phonation—in the strengthening of the breathing muscles and developing the lungs.

Notwithstanding the physiological fact that the diaphragm descends during inspiration and ascends during expiration, no attention whatever should be paid to this fact. Avoid all attempt to control the breathing, and the breath will act normally and naturally. Remember that the dia-

phragm is a muscle of inspiration and not of expiration, and performs its function automatically. All attempts to control the breath or tone at the diaphragm is suicidal. It is a factor in the physiological labyrinth of errors which has wrought so much havoc in the singing world, by creating rigidity of the body and consequent muscular interference.

When correct habits of breathing are formed, the singing should be as subconscious as the vital or living breath.

In cases where high resonance seems to be lacking and facility in voice emission is not apparent, the inspiration through the nose may be found most effective in correcting the difficulty. The lips should be slightly parted during the inspiration in order to obtain the best results. This, in order to avoid undesirable contractions. Breathing through the nose has everything to recommend it when using the voice in a damp, cold, or impure atmosphere, or when not using the voice at all. The gasping mouth breathing is not only objectionable but is a dangerous habit.

Singers who gasp for breath habitually are generally faulty in intonation, especially in the upper

register. They also acquire a wabbly tone which is most reprehensible artistically.

Take breath by gently lifting the body from the hips, the jaw being loose and the lips slightly parted. Do not close the mouth when breathing as it may cause body stiffening, especially if there is present any obstruction of the nasal passage.

"All practical rules must rest upon theory, and theory upon nature, and nature's law is ascertained by observation and experience."

Now, there may be various good methods of developing the breathing powers, but when the time comes to sing the breath inspiration should be entirely subconscious, and in expiration should not be controlled by wilful muscular action at the throat, or at the diaphragm.

This attempt to locally control is one reason for the very limited and undesirable kind of voice development of many singers. The most serious trouble lies, generally, in the mode of inspiration and the attempt directly to control expiration.

"The muscular or conscious breath means overstock. Muscular breath compels voluntary muscular control, from which results throat-contraction

and consequent pinched tones. The nervous breath means nervous, unsteady control and consequent relaxation and loss of breath." This deduction of Edmund J. Meyer, in his excellent work, "The Renaissance of the Vocal Art," without question represents the truth. The remedy for holding back or pushing the breath voluntarily, both of which are wrong, is, firstly, the correction of the mode of inspiration, or taking the breath; and, secondly, the absolute abandonment of any direct control of the breath or breathing muscles. Meyer's deduction touching this point, represents the thought of all the great teachers of Italy, differently but more scientifically expressed. It is this: "Expand to breathe, do not breathe to expand." The Italian teachers said: "Do not make a noise when you take your breath, no matter how quickly you find it necessary in singing your phrases." Mr. Meyer has simply expressed epigrammatically and scientifically a living truth, which is, in fact, one of the mainstays of the old Italian systems of training the voice.

However, as a matter of instruction, I find from experience that it is advisable to explain to students that expansion is a result of the arousing

of vital energy, aided by correct carriage, rather than of a specific effort. Expansion is the natural result of standing erect.

When one expands to breathe he finds it no longer necessary consciously to hold back the breath in expiration, for the purpose of economy of breath or for expression of any kind. The breath control is automatic under a natural law which is ascertained by observation and experience. The actual physical breath-control then, is a consequence; a most important function, it is true, but under the immutable law of nature, merely and only automatic, and under no circumstances subject to direct thought of muscular action. Hence the necessity of correct mental and physical initiative.

To sum up, the correct initiative lies in the first place in a mental conception of the pitch and character of tone or succession of tones desired, followed by the voluntary movement producing expansion. Sing without a thought of breath control! The necessary coördination will take place. Automatic adjustment of all parts will occur as soon as the necessary physical elasticity is brought about.

You will have sufficient breath for the longest

phrases, and inhalation will not be heard. Furthermore you will experience a degree of comfort in singing which will be a grateful revelation.

Finally, breath-control, except as a matter of result, which may be analyzed, is liable to be disastrous. Control the character, intensity, and equality of your *tone*, and let the breath control itself. If you try to do the reverse, you will get the cart before the horse—a very common blunder, and responsible for much evil in the singing world.

The greatest error in the cultivation of this complex and wonderful instrument, the human voice, is the attempt to take out of the hands of Nature that which Nature intended to do for herself. First and most disastrous of all, as has been pointed out, is the fallacy of direct and purposeful breath control. There is no occasion for the admonition directly to control the expiration of breath at any stage of voice culture. The idea alone is antagonistic to all natural normal development of the expressive voice, and any specific instruction as to breath-control to any student is a mistake.

The second important fallacy for consideration is the instruction to open or to close the throat.

This is, if anything, more pernicious in effect than the instruction to control the breath.

Tones may be classified as open or closed, according to the effect produced, but the instruction should be to produce the vowel correctly and distinctly. If the vowel is open, well and good; if it is closed, equally well and good. In other words, let the throat alone. For example, pronounce *naw*. You will observe the dropping of the jaw. The tone is called open, but no attempt should be made to open the throat. There will result the natural opening due to correct pronunciation. This alone will produce the correct opening of the throat, or, more properly speaking, the pharynx, and any additional effort to open it is liable to bring about an unnatural, artificial mode of tone production. But it must be borne in mind that the correct sound of *aw* should be given.

Now pronounce *nee*. The tone is called closed, but no attempt should be made to close the throat. Under the same rule there will result the natural closing due to correct pronunciation, and any further attempt to close the throat will also be liable to result disastrously. Normal, uninterrupted

respiration, combined with correct pronunciation of the word, and more particularly correct enunciation of the vowel sound, will be found to right many of the errors in voice-production. The consciousness of correct phenomena, evidenced by satisfying results and accompanied by the sense of ease in delivery, no doubt is responsible for the expressive empirical instruction of the old school, "Sing on the breath."

It makes no difference at what pitch (within its natural range) the voice is to sound, these rules obtain whether the pitch is high or low. Any instruction to open or close the throat is liable to be misleading, confusing and destructive. It is productive of objectionable muscular interference. The confusion in open or closed tones arises from wrong conceptions of what is meant by "to open" or "to close." The open tone, and also the pharynx, is the natural result of the free enunciation of what we understand to be the open vowels, and the closed tone is likewise the natural result of the correct enunciation of the closed vowels.

The third major fallacy in vocal instruction is the attempt directly to control the registers. The

instruction to sing in this or that register must have been prompted by Satan himself. Its result is often confusion worse confounded. What may be termed " registers " unquestionably exist in the operation of the normal voice, and depend entirely upon pitch and character of expression. The register used should not be preconsidered in production, but should occur automatically in natural response to the character of the idea to be expressed. Under no circumstances should change of register be premeditated. To compel the phenomena is to interfere with the workings of nature. The mechanism of the voice is such, that, under proper conditions, it automatically adjusts itself in the simplest manner possible, and unerringly, if not restrained by attempts to control the breath, to open or close the throat, or, in short, to compel the phenomena in any way. Analytically, there is room for argument as to the number of registers in the human voice, but synthetically, registers have no place in the consideration of construction.

VOICE PLACING

What is known as " voice placing " in singing is something which derives its name from an im-

pression gained by the hearer and from the singer's sensation. The term "placing" gives the idea of a static condition of the voice, and thereby promotes an undesirable static condition that is entirely at variance with the correct idea of voice. Voice is sound produced and sustained or supported by a constantly moving current of air.

It is true that there is the effect of a static condition of voice which is called placing, but this should be the result of the proper focussing of the tone. The sensations which accompany the correct voice placing are invariably the result of moving breath. The static effect of tone placing is merely incidental. To dwell upon tone placing usually causes an involuntary halting of the breath activity. Consciousness of tonal poise should be accompanied by consciousness of moving breath and tone sounding forward. The condition of body stiffness causing throat stiffness, the greatest obstacle to correct tone emission is thereby greatly relieved.

This phenomenon of voice is dependent upon a constant and regular flow of breath. There is no stopping-place for the breath as subject to the will.

It must continue on its way. It is true that the breath changes its form, and tone is the vocal manifestation of its constant motion, but the time-honored term of "voice placing" conveys a wrong idea, and has a psychological influence which is not conducive to the best results in establishing tonal poise.

The consideration of what is commonly understood as voice-placing, is worthy of particular attention chiefly on account of the very general misapprehension of exactly what voice placing really means, and the method of its accomplishment. The prevalent idea is that the voice should first be properly placed before commencing the study of artistic singing and interpretation. While it is true that the preliminary work of training the voice should be conducted along lines which permit the development of vocal ability as to purely technical skill, it is also true that the fundamental principles are alike in both preliminary and advanced study. The main idea is not different, as is generally supposed. The principle of training the voice to the end that it may finally respond to the will in the matter of producing pure tones—

an even scale, agility and resonance—is perfectly correct. The general mistake is in the assumption that the preliminary work of voice placing is a thing apart, and that once the voice is placed it will respond to the soulful demands of the singer. This is true only when the voice placing has been accomplished by attention to the end in view during all intermediate stages of development. In other words, if the voice placing seems to have been fairly well accomplished from a purely mechanical standpoint, and the student is considered to be ready for the next step, namely, the study of artistic, expressive singing, the voice will be found to be more or less unreliable; one register will be found to be weaker than another in the absence of strict attention to the mechanical part of the work (which must necessarily be less prominently considered during song, if the expression is to be sincere and hence truly artistic). Just so far as the consideration is mechanical guidance, so far must the interpretation and desired effect suffer. The results are necessarily more or less artificial. The mixture of attention to the artistic ends desired and mechanical processes, will be found to

present obstacles which are, in the very nature of the operation, insurmountable. The vocal condition resultant upon mechanical training does not lend itself to spontaneous expression in song. In short, the two things are found to be incompatible. As has been stated, the vocal organ is a part of the living being, and as an instrument of musical expression it is unique. Its mechanical adjustment, its growth and development, are found, under observation and experiment, to occur under treatment, which leaves entirely out of consideration the adjustment of the physical parts involved *per se.*

The error, the pitfall which has offered such an alluring picture of future vocal perfection to the trusting student and sanguine master alike, is this very same scheme of voice placing. The end is never reached, and when both student and teacher commence to realize that something is the matter, they both deplore the situation, but are unable to account for it. Sometimes the teacher thinks the pupil is lacking in intelligence, in musical perception or talent. The pupil commences to lose confidence in the teacher because the really desired results are not forthcoming. Providing that the

teacher is plainly conscientious in his work, the pupil frequently thinks it is his own fault and gives up entirely; or, more often, he changes teachers in the hope that some other teacher will be able to accomplish that which up to the present time has proven so elusive. The change of teachers is sometimes beneficial in some respects, depending upon the particular hobby of the new teacher as differing from the hobby of the last. Incidentally, both may be admirable in themselves. Now, possibly, under the readjustment consequent upon the new method, the pupil becomes enthusiastic over an improvement which was not apparent under the old instruction, and he promptly arrives at the conclusion that the last teacher was not competent. Possibly after a time the voice is found to be failing in some particular virtue which formerly distinguished it; and finally after what is considered to be a sufficient length of time having been devoted to the building up of this particular part, and the results not having been entirely satisfactory, the student again changes teachers, or gives up; and so the serio-comico performance goes on. The will-o'-the-wisp retains its identity and its repu-

tation as an elusive something of indefinable proportions. The poor voice has suffered readjustment after readjustment, until, like a worn out "15" puzzle, the edges commence to wear off. Proportion has vanished, the mind has become confused with the many propositions submitted as correctives. They don't seem to fit or pull together for the accomplishment of the desired end. The singer keeps on like a lame horse in a race, if he is plucky, doing the best he can. If a modicum of success comes, he is apt to resent just criticism and deems his critics his mortal foes. As a matter of fact these criticisms are for the most part just enough, in the light of musical comprehension. I once knew a prima donna who when she read an adverse criticism of her work in the morning papers would say: "That critic must have been a terribly disappointed singer." The real trouble was that this prima donna's voice had been trained with a view of compelling the vocal phenomena in certain parts of the voice. Muscular interference resulting in lack of spontaneity was ever present, and the vocal effects consequently were frequently unsympathetic and unsatisfactory. The old story of

mechanical voice placing which has been such a stumbling block in the career of hundreds of more or less successful singers was told every time she appeared. This case is representative of the common fault of vocal training which does not take into consideration that the vocal apparatus is self-adjustable in a perfectly regulated scale of the human voice.

Skill in singing is the thing desired by all vocalists. The means of obtaining this skill have been more or less successfully acquired by various methods which have at least served the purpose of arousing the interest of truth-seekers, and of accomplishing some good results. Graded exercises of rhythmical construction have naturally brought about certain musical and technical improvement in the voice, and, notwithstanding the serious handicap of wrong mental initiative, certain good must necessarily result from the perhaps unrecognized power of musical intuition seeking audible expression. Were it not for the wilful mechanical guidance which at times conflicts with the natural law of vocal expression, progress in acquiring desired skill would undoubtedly be more rapid and pro-

nounced. *Certain* mechanical guidance, if not carried to extremes, may not be particularly harmful, and under certain mental and physical conditions may even prove helpful. The objection to mechanical guidance carried out as a scientific principle is, that it is essentially opposed to the natural law of expression; and the error is in giving undue attention to the mechanical phase of the matter, as attested by practical results. The simplest and most direct way of obtaining good results is always the best, and herein is made manifest the skill and knowledge of the teacher of singing. Success in developing good voices and good singers is interdependent upon the natural aptitude, talent, musical intuition, and tractability of students; and the knowledge, skill and conscientious effort of the teacher. The chief obstacle to genuine success, as has been pointed out in these pages, is lack of concentration on the end in view, to the undoing of the whole structure at some stage of construction.

The first year of vocal study is most important, as this is the foundation-building period. The house which is built upon a foundation which is insecure finally topples and falls. Many a singer

has discovered an error in the foundation work which he recognizes as a strong neutralizing factor to success. Oftentimes it has been found necessary to undo all that has been done, and to reconstruct the edifice which is found to have been built upon sand. The lack of symmetry in the voices of so many singers—that is, the unevenness which shows itself in the scale of voices—is undoubtedly due in the largest measure to the prevailing precepts of voice training, *i.e.*, mechanical adjustment. The predominating idea in vocal training is that the voice must be placed before any attention is given to the art of singing. The fact of the matter, as has been before stated, is that the voice placing should be coincidental with, or resultant upon, attention to the art of singing. This attention should be directed along the natural lines of progressive development, from the simplest forms to the intermediate, and finally to the difficult forms of musical expression.

Methods or means for acquiring skill in singing differ according to the requirements of each individual case. The fundamental principle, however, is unchangeable. If the mind is riveted upon plac-

ing the voice in a certain position, regardless of any idea of natural expression, the tendency is for the entire body, including the breathing apparatus and the throat, to become rigid, and the voice in consequence to become unmanageable, and unresponsive to nuances incident upon expression. In short, the present theory of voice placing represents the anomaly of putting the cart before the horse, and the result is that we have built up an art of vocal management which is not in harmony with the natural laws of vocal expression. New difficulties in the rearrangement of the voice are constantly arising with every step of what is considered to be progress. The student is often heard to say, "I can sing those high notes 'forte,' but I cannot sing them 'piano,' or even 'mezzo-forte.'" This condition, of course, indicates that the high notes must be made to respond to a wilful force entirely out of proportion to the force applied to the middle and lower notes. The wrong mental attitude towards singing and voice placing is responsible for this condition, as it is this alone which produces the distorted physical condition, making the normal delivery of the tones impossible.

Another singer is heard to say: "My middle register is weak and out of proportion to the rest of my voice," or, "There is a break in my voice at C♯ or F♯" or, "I cannot sing chest tones."

Almost invariably the modern singing teacher attempts to improve these conditions by what is called "covering" at a certain point in the scale or by some kind of direct breath control.

While it is true that more or less successful results may be brought about by these various agencies, it is also true that the most successful results cannot be experienced if the fundamental truth is not observed. The snarl remains. The removal of one difficulty finds the singer involved in some other vocal trouble, and when the new obstacle seems about to be overcome, there is a recurrence of the old difficulty; or complications arise and the partial conquering of one troublesome factor seems to pave the way for some even more serious difficulty. The usual result, of course, is discouragement, followed by a change of teachers, new method, etc., in the hope that at last the mystery will be solved.

There is a certain standard which may be

attained under the prevalent mechanical idea interspersed with the true natural, emotional instincts regarding expression, which varies in different individuals. Ultimate success depends very largely upon how much influence the natural, spontaneous forcefulness of individual expression has upon the proceedings. If the inherent desire to express naturally is sufficiently strong to overcome the mechanical handicap, conditions may improve by the righteous demands of the soul for adequate expression. Seldom, however, is the real cause of improvement realized by students—much less pointed out by the teachers. It is, rather, pointed out that such improvement is due to the careful observance of the mechanical rules and the method of adjustment; where, if the truth were known, the student has succeeded in spite of the specific instruction.

He has succeeded though weighted down by the superfluous load of thought regarding the mechanical engineering of the voice. He has won out in spite of a serious handicap. More often, at a certain stage of vocal development, when a singer stands face to face with his vocal limitations,

which he feels really ought not to exist, the struggle for real vocal efficiency becomes a fight in the dark. He first resorts to one device and then another. He gains here and loses there. He thrusts, grasps at every opening, and with valiant persistence strives to wrench himself free from troublesome physical environments. This frequently occurs within the range of what he feels to be his natural vocal limitations. The tenor feels that he should sing his A or B♭ because sometimes he can do it. He ought to sing this interval or that interval with reasonable regularity, and at the same time he is conscious of the fact that there is considerable uncertainty about the matter. If he has a slight cold or is not just in what he calls "good voice," he is reasonably certain that he will not arrive when the time comes. All these and, as a matter of fact, nearly all other similar difficulties have their origin in the incorrect fundamental principle of voice production as followed in modern vocalism. In modern voice culture, placing the voice is considered to be the first necessary step; for instead of fixing the mind upon a musical effect desired, the direction of thought is generally towards placing the voice

in some part of the anatomy—the front teeth, the back of the nose, the hard palate, or the top or the back of the head, or the spine. The student is told he should feel certain sensations in the chest, in the mouth, in the forehead—and he forthwith sets about to do something with the object of making such sensations come to him. It is a good deal like telling the boy that in order to catch the sparrow, you must first put salt on his tail. Then, with supreme indifference to anything like observance to the laws of nature, the student is told to hold his larynx down or up in order to produce correct results; and in order further to clarify the situation, he is told to raise his uvula and at the same time to hold down his larynx.

A complete and authentic record of these and similar, if not even more grotesque methods, all of which are worse than useless, would fill many a volume of interesting reading as bearing upon the right and wrong principles.

It is sufficient for the present purposes to point out the futility of such methods, and the positive harm which is liable to accrue from all devices which attempt directly to control the organ of

sound, or any part of the physical mechanism of the voice-producing apparatus, during phonation or singing. Devices which have for their purpose the controlling of the parts with some accompanying consideration or regard for musical effect are vicious and tantalizing, because the mechanical control always obtrudes itself in a more or less offensive manner and the cause of failure is not so apparent.

Devices which have for their purpose the controlling of the parts without regard for the musical effect are at the same time the most ridiculous and the most monstrous in their evil effects. On the other hand, devices which have for their purpose the bringing about of flexibility of the body, and might be properly classified under the head of physical culture, are generally commendable. The knowledge and skill of the teacher here become strong factors in the development.

The correct mental attitude and the proper physical condition are the necessary requirements for complete success.

"Support the tone," is one of the empirical slogans of the old school, and to support the tone is no more or less than to feed the tone with the

breath. Instead of instructing to support the tone or feed the breath, the instruction generally should be to sing the tone steadily and evenly. The mind then conceives the effect desired, and the breath actually feeds the tone automatically in response to the idea of effect previously conceived. The same mental process should obtain in the consideration of the old empirical instruction, "Sing on the breath." David D. Taylor, in his "Psychology of Singing," points out very clearly a common error in modern teaching in these words: "Empirical knowledge is always applied in the prevailing mechanical spirit. The attempt is always made to translate the subconscious empirical understanding of the voice into rules for direct mechanical management. Under the influence of the mechanical idea, the modern teacher's most valuable possession, empirical knowledge of the voice, becomes utterly unserviceable."

Instead of instructing to sing on the breath, the proper instruction would again be, "Sing the tone steadily and evenly." The singer's sensation would be the hearing of the tone, steadily and evenly sung, the consciousness of

vocal poise, and the appreciation of tonal balance.

The physiological consideration, if given to the pupil as the initiative, frequently results again in getting the cart before the horse. It generally has succeeded, and it generally will succeed, most admirably in producing a miserable failure in the working-out, because the principle is wrong; because it is diametrically opposed to the natural law of the expression of human emotions.

Common Errors

Technical skill in singing comes from practice, the same as is the case with other instruments—for the human voice may be considered as an instrument; but practice does not always make perfect, either with the voice or with the violin or piano. It is the kind of practice, rather than the number of hours given to it, which determines the result. The vocal mechanism is the most difficult to understand, because during singing the instrument cannot be observed, and we know by experience that the attempt to obtain direct management of the muscular movements during singing is nothing short of monstrous in its evil effects.

The general principle that there is one way in

which the voice must be handled during the practice of singing is essentially incorrect, because this involves the attempt to compel the phenomena of voice rather than to permit it to occur. Only when the voice is permitted to act involuntarily in response to the fiat of will, directed along the line of effect desired, will it steadily grow in beauty and ease and finally approximate technical perfection.

Fortunately, all teachers do not agree that the voice must be handled in some way either spontaneous or instinctive in order to improve it. Expression in song is identical with expression in speech, so far as conscious management of the apparatus is concerned, and any attempt to deviate from this principle is bound to be more or less injurious. The more earnest the student, the more disastrous the result under wrong thought and the acceptance of principles which are not in accord with natural laws.

Nevertheless, it is true that the prevailing thought since the time of Garcia has been that the voice must be managed by giving direct attention to the management of the muscles involved, and

this we may call the most destructive common error of the day.

This error has been fruitful of more discord than can ever be estimated. In fact, it has brought about universal confusion. The gist of the matter has been vainly sought through the agency of direct local control of the parts involved ever since the discovery of the laryngoscope in 1855.

History records that the empirical methods of instruction were in use for the first one hundred and fifty years, dating from the earliest records of the old Italian school—the year 1600—which was simultaneous with the birth of Italian opera. During this first century and a half of systematic voice culture, history further records that progress was uninterrupted—as evidenced by successful results.

In 1723, Tosi published the first known book on the voice, the title of the work being "Osservazioni Sopra il Canto Figurato"; and three years later Mancini published his "Practical Reflections on the Canto Figurato." The principal information of a specific nature regarding the voice is embodied in their ideas about the registers.

Tosi says that there are three registers, and Mancini says there are only two; so it seems that even at this early date disagreement prevailed as to theory. In 1741, Ferrein, a French physician, published a treatise on voice production, and thereafter a number of scientific investigators contributed to the literature of the day regarding the mechanical operations of the voice; but the real devastating mechanical school commenced in 1855.

In 1805 Manuel Garcia, the son of Manuel del Popolo Viscenti, was born. He followed in the footsteps of his father as a singer and teacher, and in 1832 commenced his vocal studies. Being of an inquisitive turn of mind, his scholarly instincts were directed along the lines of investigation regarding the subject closest to his heart. His curiosity was aroused, and his genius for discovery was made manifest in the evolution of the laryngoscope.

Garcia's estimate of the value of his discovery has been spoken of in another chapter. Suffice it to say that if Garcia had been warned not to depart from the empirical mode of instruction in singing, as Lot's wife was warned not to turn

around in her flight, a good many present-day vocal tragedies would have been obviated. As it was, Garcia was the first to base practical instruction in singing on scientific knowledge of the mechanism of the voice, and thereby unwittingly precipitated nearly as great a calamity upon the vocal world as that which biblical history tells us befell Lot's wife.

Present-day writers on the subject of voice culture are unanimous in their opinion that the old empirical methods of instruction were sufficient for the needs of olden times, but often deny the all-sufficiency of such methods for modern needs. They think that something has been lost. This is not without some show of reason, for in the light of known and acknowledged facts, the celebrities of past decades were developed in this way, and singers of to-day are not considered to have been so developed.

"The Old Italian method of instruction, to which vocal music owed its highest condition, was purely empirical," says Emma Seiler in her book entitled "The Voice in Singing" (1886).

The differences of opinion are now more pro-

nounced than in the olden times, because under the influence of the erroneous general principle of mechanical guidance there is infinitely more opportunity for such variety of opinion.

The chaos that has resulted is but a natural consequence of the opportunities for dissension thus afforded.

In my observation, however, the delving into the science of physiology for the satisfactory answer to the eternal question is more prevalent in America than in any country of Europe, although its influence is everywhere felt.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE "LOST VOCAL ART"

It is popularly supposed that at some time between the age of the great singers and the present time the secret of the old art of successful voice production was lost. The conjectures as to exactly what this secret was have been numerous, but all explanations as to what it was, and how and when it was lost, have been unsatisfactory.

The physiological analysis of vocal phenomena has been time and again proven absolutely inade-

quate, and its present application to synthetic methods has made it a misleading factor to the point of becoming a positive menace to true vocal art. Individual methods have been more or less successful in developing voices, but for the most part artists who have been developed by these various methods have been unable to impart their knowledge in such a way as to be practically efficacious and universally successful—even with students who possessed the necessary musical talent and natural voice.

The difficulties of overcoming what are known as the breaks in the voice and the management of the registers have been ever present. The developing of voices throughout their range, so as to produce easy and effective delivery of low, medium, and high notes, possessing evenness as to beauty of quality, power, and expressiveness, has presented obstacles which have appeared to be well-nigh insurmountable.

The mythical something known as " THE LOST ART " is supposed to have been in successful operation years ago, and this loss is referred to as one of the great, regrettable calamities of vocal history.

If it could only be found, how surely present difficulties would be overcome! What an oasis would spring up in the desert of forlorn vocal hopes and ambitions! All theoretical strife and discord would cease, and unanimity of opinion would prevail regarding the chief essentials in voice development. Peace, harmony, and general vocal prosperity would prevail. Lo—the vocal millennium would be at hand!

Historians tell us truly that the old masters left no written records or instruction as to this wonderful secret. The vital principle which was seemingly the fountain spring of universal success is apparently a mythical something which is generally given up as lost, and its life and death as an entity are shrouded in deepest mystery. We have nothing left but the historical records of work which is supposed to have owed its success to the knowledge of this unknown or unrecognized principle or recipe.

It is a significant fact that the commencement of the decline of the old successful school was coincidental with the commencement of what is now known as scientific voice production, based upon

the investigation of physiological facts. Tosi and Mancini said nothing of these things, probably because their art did not rest upon knowledge of the physiological phenomena.

Shortly before the advent of Garcia, various attempts were made to establish a science of voice production based on the knowledge of physiology. This movement was given impetus by the use of the laryngoscope, and Garcia's first belief was that his discovery would be of incalculable value and benefit in the synthesis of vocal development. Experience proved the contrary, and Garcia's own opinion regarding its value to the vocal world was materially changed before the end of his career.

Physiology, in its present accepted relation to vocal art, must be consigned to its proper position in the minds of men, and the true living principle be reinstated. The sciences of acoustics, physiology, and other kindred sciences have their analytical corroborative value, but the bread of vocal life—past, present, and future—was, is, and shall be the science of psychology.

The many scientific works which have been written informing us more or less correctly concerning

the conditions of body and of sound (acoustics) during phonation, serve little purpose so far as the advancement of practical voice building is concerned. The old teachers did not know anything about these things as such, and were blissfully free from the influence of misapplied science of later days.

Many of our modern singers and would-be singers have given up the ghost in a vocal sense, having been thrown to the crocodiles, or sacrificed upon the altar of scientific investigation.

We departed from the empirical system of voice training, being lured away by the glamor of a short cut to vocal glory. This short cut was to be made possible by the knowledge of physiological conditions during song, as shown by analysis. This paved the way for innumerable and useless controversies concerning the scientific truth of such conditions, and while the attention of the vocal world was being directed to this presumable mine of Solomon, the precious moments were fleeing. The result was lost time, or worse, for the individuals engaged in these futile explorations.

We are returning worn and weary from pros-

pecting, sadder but wiser men and women; for we have learned the exact location of the real treasure. No more vocal sing-quick schemes should entice us from the reliable path to vocal freedom.

The snares and delusions of the pseudo-scientists and the beckonings of the true scientists, toward the goal of knowledge with which we are not vocally concerned, should alike be powerless to distract our attention.

Like the wise men of old, our eyes should be riveted upon the bright particular star of our quest. The constellations of the vocal firmament should not longer beguile or blind us. We are now able to proceed by the light of rightly applied science, with no more interruption or aggravation or vexing of spirit than those which are contingent upon the experience and happenings of every wayfarer on the road to learning and accomplishment.

Regarding the old Italian method, it is obvious that the main idea was naturalness of expression, coupled with sustained beautiful tone and agility, perfected by years of training. Each voice was exercised with particular reference to its natural characteristic, known as its "*genre*." Evidence

that the cut-and-dried method for all voices was not a part of the old Italian school or system, is shown by Mancini in his historical sketch of these schools.[4] He says that the most celebrated schools which flourished for so long a time in Italy and were still in existence at the end of the last century, sent out many singers who were made famous not only by their profession, but by the number of new singers they made in return. To these they transmitted in uninterrupted succession the beauties of the art, *in their own varied styles.*[5]

Speaking of the various great singers who were

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[4] Farinelli was perhaps the most distinguished pupil of the school of Porpora. In 1727, when he was in Rome, he met Bernacchi.

In a grand duo these rival singers sought to outdo each other in the pouring forth of beautiful voice and in the execution of difficult passages. Farinelli, owning his inferiority, requested Bernacchi to give him lessons, which he did. This resulted in perfecting the voice of Farinelli. He had seven or eight tones more than ordinary singers.

Mancini, in writing of his voice, says: "This voice was thought a marvel because it was so perfect, so powerful, so sonorous, and so rich in its extent that its equal has never been heard."

[5] Among the oldest and most successful singers and teachers was Alessandro Scarlatti, born in Sicily in 1659. He taught in Naples and Rome.

Scarlatti was considered the founder of the Neopolitan

the shining lights of vocal art at the end of the seventeenth century, Mancini says of the Chev. Baldassare Ferri, born in Perugia: "He was possessed of a most beautiful, flexible, sweet, and harmonious voice, and had the widest range one ever heard. His contemporaries wrote that words could not express the beauty of his voice and his graceful manner of singing. He had to a high degree *all the necessary schooling* in every style of singing. He was *joyful, fierce, grave,* and *tender, all at will.*

"Again, Francesca Boschi, of Bologna, was a celebrity of such *intelligence* that in Venice she was baptized the 'Musical Solomon.'

School. His most notable pupil was Porpora (1686–1767), called the greatest singing master of that time. Porpora was the teacher of Caffarelli, born in 1703, and of Farinelli, born in 1705.

The first school of music in Italy was established in Bologna ten years before the discovery of America, 1482.

Pistocchi (Bologna, 1700) was the teacher of the celebrated Pasta.

Francesco Tosi (1650–1730) was also trained at Bologna.

Manuel del Popolo Vicenti Garcia was born in 1775, at Seville. He went to Italy in 1811 and was received as an artist in Naples and Rome. There he met Anzani (1750), one of the best tenors of the day. He had much to do with the elder Garcia's further development as a singer and teacher.

"Two other singers equally celebrated were Siface and Chev. Matteucci, who were considered singular for their *evenness of voice* and *interpretation.* When eighty years of age, Matteucci was still able to sing in any style, and preserved a voice of such *clarity* and *purity* that, if he were not seen, one would think him a singer in the flower of his youth. Francesco Antonio Pistocchi taught many great singers and teachers. One of his pupils was Antonio Bernacchi, who taught in Bologna. Bernacchi was the teacher of Mancini. He was said to have possessed by nature a voice of only ordinary calibre, not very good, but by persistent and painstaking endeavor, and strict attention to advice given by Pistocchi, he developed a voice of great beauty, extension and power. He became famous as a singer in Italy, Germany, England, and particularly at the Bavarian court. Finally, Bernacchi became famous as a teacher. Among the other celebrated pupils of Pistocchi were Antonio Pasi of Bologna, Giambattista Mirelli and Annibale Pio Fabri of the same city, and Bartolino di Faenza."

Mancini points out that the five celebrated pupils of Pistocchi, although receiving their instruction

from one teacher, had each an absolutely different style, each one's style corresponding to his disposition and natural gifts. He states further that to be a successful teacher of the voice one cannot have only one way of instructing pupils. The teacher must know many ways in which to handle his pupils, and in order to train each individual he must know the right remedy for each voice.

This is a strong argument against the general supposition that some particular method, in its generally accepted meaning, was in vogue in the olden times. It does not, however, present an argument against the most probable fact, that the old teachers followed a general principle which may be scientifically explained as psychological rather than physiological.

In the old schools the mental attitude determined the results, and the mental attitude being directed along the lines of idealization of effect, the physical development followed as a natural consequence.

A striking example of the prevalent use of this principle came under my observation during my student days in Milan, Italy. It was my privilege to hear the first five performances of "Pag-

liacci" at the Dal Verme theatre. I attended the opera pretty regularly, and was particularly interested in this production, as I was personally acquainted with the composer, Leoncavallo. There was a great deal of interest among the artists concerning the methods of the leading tenor. The young artist selected to create the rôle of *Canio.* had had little stage experience. He had only recently made his début as *Lohengrin* at a provincial theatre, and there was a good deal of speculation as to the success he would make as *Canio.* He appeared on the opening night, and made a distinct hit with the public—singing with what is known as the wide open white tone. When he commenced the great lament, "*Recitar mentre preso dal delirio,*" the "open" effect was more pronounced, and when he arrived at the "*Ridi Pagliacci sul tuo amore in franto,*" it did not seem possible that he could finish the phrase with that style of singing.

The large number of professional tenors who were "at liberty," and who nightly congregated in the rear of the theatre, momentarily expected to hear Giraud crack and collapse. Giraud did noth-

ing of the kind. He went right along singing, and finished his engagement of a number of weeks. The fact of the matter was that he had not unduly opened his throat, although he had come dangerously near it. He had used the most extreme white tone known in Italy, *as a matter of taste* in expression. In this particular opera, so full of excessive passion and violence, the artistic portrayal of the part permitted the vocal exaggeration.[6]

One year later I heard Giraud in the opera "I Lombardi." I was astonished at the apparent change of voice; he was singing throughout the opera "*tutto chiuso*," or what is known as the closed tone—in reality, the dark color of the sombre voice. The style of singing was completely changed. Giraud sang Pagliacci afterwards, and again used the white color; but not to the extreme degree as at the time of his début.

Taylor's work on the "Psychology of Singing" is strong in the tearing-down of the principle of

[6] M. Victor Maurel, that sterling artist, great as an actor as well as a singer, created the rôle of *Tonio*. It was Maurel who suggested the writing of the prologue—as he reviewed the opera before this most important number was written. Maurel created *Falstaff* at La Scala in 1893. The writer had the pleasure of hearing the first performance of the opera.

the prevailing schools of mechanical vocal management, but we find nothing in the history of vocal art to support the avowed purpose of his work,—*i.e.*, to prove the scientific soundness of instruction by imitation. In fact, the direct instruction was to avoid this very thing, on account of its tendency to destroy individuality in the singer.

The statement is often heard that there are only two ways of learning to sing—the right way and the wrong way. This is perfectly correct. The right way is the skilful following out of the right principle, and the wrong way is the attempt to accomplish guided by wrong principles. The right principle, then, is the striving toward a purely subconscious physical activity, superinduced by a correct idealization of the effect to be produced.

The wrong principle is the striving toward a conscious physical activity, directed toward the process rather than the idealization of desired effect.

The fundamental principle—the determining force and chief characteristic of the successful old Italian system of singing and teaching the voice—is thus satisfactorily explained.

The old masters trained their pupils by observ-

ing and criticizing the sounds of the voice, and the general effect produced by the singer. Incidentally, the vocal organs were trained. The old masters studied and taught the voice, the modern masters study and teach the physical mechanism of the vocal organs, and thereby hope to improve the voice. This has been the fatal error. The chasm between the two principles, which at first seemed to be so small, so very narrow and inconsequential, gradually widened until the parting of the ways, unnoticed at the time, was finally lost sight of by succeeding generations of teachers and singers. Then came the awakening to the fact that something was wrong. The champions of this, that, and the other favored theory or method vied with each other, and chaos reigned. Every method based upon the physiological idea of direct control of muscular activity of one kind or another—in short, the primary training of the vocal apparatus, instead of the training of the voice—brought distress and failure as its major resultant.

The failure to comprehend the significance of the difference between training the voice and thereby training the vehicle of voice, as opposed to training

the vehicle of voice, thereby hoping to train the voice, is the failure which has precipitated so many vocal tragedies, which, no doubt, is the responsible agent in chief of the discord and dissension, and which has resulted in such a deplorable confusion and distortion of the truth.

It has already been stated that the old successful school of singing was empirical in its method. This means that the observations of the sounds of the voice presented the only basis of inquiry as to the vocal conditions. The questions of adjustment of that part of the organs of sound capable of direct manipulation, did not enter into the synthetic or building up process.

Studying the vocal mechanism was not a part of the old system. The laws of their operation were unknown, and therein perhaps was the safety and surety of the old mode of procedure. There is no greater exemplification of the fact that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, than is contained in the evidence bearing on this subject. Tosi's observation, "that the voice which is not well produced seems to be choked in the throat," is an example of calling attention to an undesirable con-

dition from effect produced. The opposite of this condition is that the voice really should not seem to be choked in the throat. It is not natural to choke the tone in the throat in spontaneous vocal expression, hence the instruction "*canta naturale,*" which means "sing naturally."

If the energy, influenced by the will power, is directed alone towards seeking a placement of the voice mechanically, it is improperly directed. If, on the other hand, the energy is directed principally towards delivering the message, it is then properly directed and will make far better conditions of sound. The first method represents the building up of systematic artificiality in tone production. This art of artificial tone production has been brought to a very perfect condition in some instances, but this highway frequently leads to vocal injury. So far as the true art of self-expression is concerned, it frequently leads to a goal which is not desirable or desired—albeit that, to a certain extent, beautiful tones, regarded as mere meaningless sounds, may oftentimes accompany the result. In short, mechanical beauty, cold and crystalline, is possible but not assured along this dangerous high-

way. Hard, strident tones more frequently mark the result, because the human voice is not and cannot be treated as an instrument of wood or metal.

The Old School was right in principles, and so far as it went, was sound in doctrine. The principles of the Old School, however, were temporarily discarded in the insane pursuit of results along impossible lines—impossible because in direct violation of nature's laws. This fact was not discovered until repeated failure to accomplish good results along the new lines of procedure proved to the vocal world that they were hot upon the trail of an undesirable quarry.

Whether the theory that the quality of tone is determined by the resonance cavities alone, or from changes of the vocal cords as held by Professor Scripture, should not be the chief point of consideration to the vocalist. The mere belief in the correctness or incorrectness of these various conclusions has little bearing upon the true synthesis of correct voice-production. As has been said before, it is a very interesting study, this physiological and anatomical analysis of vocal conditions during phonation; but, regarded as a helpful fac-

tor in perfecting a system of vocal training, these considerations must be used with discretion, even in the hands of the "conoscienti." Generally speaking, they resolve themselves into a formidable factor militating against desirable or desired results.

The Correct Fundamental Principle

We have found that the fundamental principle representing the backbone of the old and successful school of singing was that which is known to science as the psychological principle, the mental consciousness of effect in vocal utterance being the constant consideration and guide for the singer. The idea of improvement through the development of the physical powers by means of exercises guided for the most part by musical conception and appreciation, was the actual though unnamed vital principle of thought and action. It has been truly said that the old masters were not aware of the scientific soundness of their position. It was not skill of physical adjustment which was sought, but rather obtained, as a consequence of mental conception of effect desired.

The gradual and perfectly natural increase of physical power, endurance, and general vocal abil-

ity was the result. The effect conceived determined the character of the physical development as a natural consequence.

Training a singer to meet the demands of music written for the coloratura soprano, for instance, meant practising scales, roulades, trills, etc., which would naturally develop agility in execution. The tenor and soprano leggiero, were trained in a similar manner. Other voices were trained more especially by means of exercises more sustained in character. Breath-control was a consequence of exercises of long-sustained vocal phrases, but be it remembered that the development of breath-control was purely a consequence. If the singer during the period of training could not sustain a phrase to its end, he was never told to conserve his breath. He was told to do those things, which actually brought about the most favorable physical condition for breath supply.

He then continued practising different exercises and solfeggi, which gradually developed the breathing muscles, and consequently sustaining ability. None of this heritage is lost. The various books of exercises with and without words are available now

as they have always been. Method in its old significance was merely the arrangement of graded exercises adopted by various teachers, and which were sung in a manner to satisfy the ear of the master.

The term "method" arrived at the point of serious and dangerous significance when the various schools of local mechanical adjustment of the physical parts involved commenced to be considered as a principle of development.

The principle proved the undoing of the vocal world. The living principle was sidetracked and forgotten. In the place of natural expression, the principle of mechanical guidance was introduced as the preparatory measure. It proved to be a weed of evil influence which grew steadily until the virtuous stalk of direct idealism of effect was nearly choked. It is of vital importance that this weed be pulled up by the roots and forever discarded—to be used neither as a preparatory measure nor as an assisting agent. In either capacity, it is a detriment to true vocal progress. The degree of the evil influence can be measured only by the amount of dependence placed upon its efficacy, and the amount of time spent in considering its effect.

As has been pointed out, some singers succeed in spite of it, and even endorse the systems which include the acceptance of these same pernicious doctrines. Such singers have signally failed to grasp their true significance. The good has outweighed the evil in the general working-out, and they have succeeded, to a certain extent, in spite of the retarding stultifying influence of these doctrines.

Even so, the probabilities are that the same artists would find an immense relief in the matter of vocal effort, as well as immense improvement in vocal effect, if they were to differentiate more carefully. The effect of what is known as a mere cultivated, well-placed and expressive voice is much more readily acquired without mechanical guidance: this without reference to the immeasurable untold suffering and error, evidenced by the premature breaking-down of the voices, superinduced by its influence.

Properly speaking, methods are systematic means of acquiring skill in singing, and are primarily good or bad according to the underlying principles by which they are governed. The resurrection of the lost vocal art is possible in every

vocal studio, simply by a reversion to the true living principle and the extermination of these false principles. The individual methods will then mean the various arrangements of vocal exercises to meet the requirements of the individual case, and the use of devices to produce the necessary physical elasticity. Success will then depend upon the skill of the teacher, and the receptability of the pupil.

With the general recognition of correct underlying principles, the race for supremacy would be fully as exciting and interesting and be attended by far better results. Comparative success would then be a matter of skill, resulting from experience in the working-out of the same principles, and not in the working-out of different principles.[7]

The secret of success, then, in using or training the voice, lies primarily in the skilful use of the cor-

[7] At a recent meeting of a well-known medical society an exhibition was given by exponents of the avowedly physiological school and their pupils. In the opinion of a number of well-known singers who were present, the results of their efforts were, to say the least, unsatisfactory.

At the close of the meeting a distinguished impresario and conductor remarked to the writer: "It was awful! There wasn't a decent tone made here to-day"—an opinion in which the audience generally concurred.

rect principle, easily within the grasp of all. The practical activities in the Old School consisted in the training of the singer's ear to detect in the sounds of his own voice the desirable and the undesirable character of tones, and in the training of the ear to detect in the sounds of other voices the same undesirable and desirable character of tones. This comprehended a system of subjective and objective study. During this period the judgment of tonal effect was developed, and the ear of the singer was eventually the final court of appeal.

The old masters and singers were fully aware of the fact that the singer is at first incapable of correctly estimating the value of his own voice as to the quantity or quality, and hence the entire dependence of the singer upon the judgment of the master. By constant attention to the advice of the master, the singer's ear was educated to the recognition of both good and bad effects. The power of discrimination in the effect of their own voices was thus established. Coincidentally, familiarity with the physical effect upon the singer himself during the production of his own voice

was an added factor in the consciousness of right and wrong production.

The singer's sensation during song was a supplementary means of determining right and wrong conditions. In this way his judgment was developed: he learned by experience.

Careful attention to correct intonation and tone quality throughout the exercises, from single sustained tones to the most elaborate musical figures, was constantly enforced by the master, but never directed to the process of the physical phenomena.

Herein lies the difference between the successful empirical system of the Old School and the mechanical systems of the present day. It is not a surprising development in the progress of voice culture that the idea of mechanical adjustment gradually superseded the empirical system. Here was something new under the sun! Here was a short cut to the goal desired! Here was a knowledge of something which appeared on the surface to have a direct and intimate relation to vocal art! It took time and a long try-out to discover that a serpent had crept into the garden of the vocal Eden, and it has taken time to realize that the effect of the fatal

step is analogous to the effect of original sin.

During this period of gradual change of principle the devastating effect was not immediately discernible. It acted as a sort of slow poison. The feeling of conscious direct control of the parts at first lent a feeling of security which was grateful to the singer. The combination of the mechanical idea, and the intuitive promptings of the singer towards wholesome expression, presented, as it still presents, a curious intermingling of evil and good. The elemental character of effect attending the strict following out of each of these principles has been plainly shown to be decidedly favorable to the automatic adjustment of the parts under the system employed by the Old School; but under the fantastic hallucination that mechanical guidance was to be an assisting factor in the making of a singer, the evil influence gradually worked its way insidiously into the general constructive scheme.

The art of mechanical guidance became a fine art, but at a cost of wear and tear upon the vocal mechanism, which resulted in the early breaking

down of voices, in harshness of quality, and in a mistaken conception of real vocal power.

The art of fine expression commenced to lose its place in the general result. Teachers and singers experienced a difficulty in adjusting or placing the voices heretofore unknown at this juncture. Getting the voice *in the right place* was deemed to be the necessary preliminary step to artistic expression, and ever since the vocal world seems to have blindly accepted this order of procedure.

This is when the cart was formally placed before the horse—resulting in the grotesque or tragic position of many vocal students of to-day. The psychological principle is the *something* which has been lost—so frequently referred to by the earnest seekers after truth and contemporaneous writers. This is the light of past ages that has become dim by non-use. This is the lamp that must be trimmed and kept burning, that its rays may shed effulgence in the dark places of the vocal world, illuminating the paths which lead to the estate of ideal vocal conditions, unsullied and unhampered by the accumulated clouds of error—ever ready to carry the message of the mind and the soul.

PART II

THE SYNTHESIS OF VOICE PRODUCTION

General Observations in Practical Voice-Building

In preparing a practical synthetic system of vocal development, it is advisable to point out clearly at the outset that no two voices can be trained in exactly the same manner, for the reason that all voices possess either different defects, or the same defects in different degrees. All vocal combinations are different in different voices. Method must be utilized by the singer and teacher to meet the requirements of each individual case.

Voices should be tonally trained in the musical scale, from the natural conversational tones of the speaking voice—generally from the highest easy-speaking tone—downward, and then from the lowest tone upward, taking care that the extension exercises should be graduated. At no time should the voice be forced upward or downward, beyond the pitch of comfortable delivery.

In this way the normal, natural development

will take place in the most satisfactory manner. The moment the ear of the teacher detects a tone in the least degree strident or unpleasant, the fact should be pointed out, in order that the pupil shall not form the habit of accepting in his own voice a tone quality which is undesirable.

The relation of the singing and the speaking voice is so intimate that it is well to remember that the expressive singing voice is identical with the expressive speaking voice. In the words of Dr. Fillebrown of Harvard University, the only difference is, "that the singing voice is sustained, and changed from one pitch to another by definite intervals, over a wide compass that includes notes not attempted in speech.

"In speaking, tone is unsustained, not defined in pitch, and the length of the tone is not governed by the measure of music."

Dr. Morrell MacKenzie's saying that "singing is a help to good speaking, as the greater includes the less," is a point well taken; and it is also true that good speaking is a help to good singing. This is a fact well worth remembering, as it is of con-

stant educational value in developing the singing voice.

The careless mumbling of words in ordinary conversation is in itself not only most reprehensible, but it acts as a positive detriment to the progress of the singing voice, and to the singer's art of distinct delivery of words in song.

In song, words and music are inseparable, one is a concomitant part of the other, and bad habits of careless articulation, enunciation, and pronunciation are formidable factors militating against the vocal interests of the singer.

It is of the greatest importance also to remember that the art of singing is an art of self-expression from beginning to end, and this fact should be observed, kept constantly in mind at every stage of training. The moment we forget the fact, we are in danger of degenerating into vocal artificiality.

Regarding the classification of voices, they classify themselves under a healthy and normal system of voice culture, provided that the exercises given are properly graded. Commencing with the natural speaking voice, the outline of the true singing

voice forms itself as unmistakably as the development of a photographic film.

Terminology

The terminology of various schools of singing extant has been criticised by some writers as indefinite and as having no meaning. This criticism is in a certain sense just—that is, when the terminology conveys no meaning to the student.

Terms which cannot be clearly comprehended or understood should be avoided, on account of the confusion which may result in the mind of the student. What may be called psychological or empirical terminology is important if properly applied, and such terminology is perfectly admissible. As a rule, it is more desirable than physiological terminology, inasmuch as singing is more psychological than physiological. It is only necessary that an understanding exist between teacher and pupil as to the meaning of the term, relative to its practical bearing on what is required.

Terminology, properly applied, is nothing more nor less than a code, or kind of shorthand communication, and is useful in order to facilitate the work.

It is enough that the student understand what

the teacher means. Any part of a cut-and-dried terminology which conveys no meaning to the student, and which the student vainly tries to comprehend, results only in a vague, hazy mental condition not productive of good results. Such terms should speedily be changed to a mode of expression which can be grasped by the student, as evidenced by successful results in practical application.

If a term conveys the idea which proves fruitful of particularly good results, there is every reason to believe that it is wise to use that term or expression so long as it serves its purpose.

The vocabulary of terms in common use could be reduced advantageously to all concerned, and the work of voice-building brought to a much more easy and satisfactory basis as a consequence of such reduction. The old Italian precepts which are traditional have been in a measure summed up as follows:

"Sing on the breath."

"Open the throat."

"Sing the tone forward."

"Support the tone."

Taylor in his "Psychology of Singing" gives

a very complete and lucid explanation of the general thought of the day regarding these traditional precepts, which shows that their interpretation as they stand depends entirely upon the viewpoint. They admit of a wide diversity of opinion as to their practical meaning, and although these slogans still obtain in nearly all modern vocal studies, their interpretation is as diversified as possible, viewed in the light of practical results.

These precepts of the old Italian School can be best understood by those who have had practical experience as students under the Italian masters themselves, or their disciples; to the layman, they are, in fact, almost unintelligible.

When Lamperti, the famous teacher, said, "*La voce che non è appoyiata sul petto non va,*" he referred to the consciousness of chest vibrations during phonation. This consciousness is most pronounced in the lower voice, less in the medium, and still less in the upper voice.

The construction put upon these terms by the writer has been set forth in a previous chapter, and has been referred to as the weakness, not the strength, of the old Italian School, for the reason

that the terms are capable of too many constructions put upon their meaning.

A strong factor of the old Italian School was undoubtedly the practical demonstrations of the *Maestri.* In this way they made their meaning clear. Pupils were not asked to imitate the master, but by hearing the master produce the tone they more readily acquired the mode. This might be called intuitive absorption of how to accomplish results rather than imitation—as the art of mimicry.

" Singing on the breath " and " supporting the tone " mean practically the same thing. As to "singing the tone forward," the natural production of the voice is forward, providing that the breath having been properly taken, is allowed to pour out —the breath is not wilfully controlled in exit. The open throat is an explanatory term, and should never be used as a constructive principle, because a part of the throat actually opens properly in response to the putting into effect of the desire to produce words or vowels without restraint. The old *Maestri* more often said, " Open the mouth "— not " Open the throat." This latter was a result.

The terminology which has resulted in such confusion to students and teachers alike is the attempt to make use constructively of terms which can be properly used only analytically.

Registers

The consideration of changes of register in the voice is important on account of the general failure to comprehend the significance of normal and natural changes of register as distinguished from abnormal and unnatural changes.

To will a change of registers is to depart from the theory that registers change automatically in response to natural law, incidental to pitch and character of expression. It eliminates the primary psychological factor as the means of most successful accomplishment in the musical expression of an idea.

These changes of register are incidental in speech, exactly as in song. They are constantly noticeable in the voices of well trained orators or actors. Those who were fortunate enough to have heard the voice of the Italian tragedian, Tommaso

Salvini, will particularly appreciate the truth of this statement.

Every change of register which is brought about by compelling a phenomenon, such as wilfully carrying the register up or down, is driving a nail in the artificial construction of voice, so prevalent. On the other hand, every change of register which occurs as a physical sequence to tone idealism, and coincidentally with the natural expression of ideas, is forging the correct chain of natural, normal, enduring voice.

To raise the uvula or to lower it wilfully during song represents a device consistent with the scheme of voice production based upon physiological principles, which must be uncompromisingly condemned. As a physical exercise, it has been considered a good thing to raise and lower the uvula, and to raise and lower the base of the tongue, by voluntarily opening the pharynx: what is commonly called "opening the throat."

If you stand before a mirror and command yourself to open the mouth, and then to open the back of the mouth, so that under observation the tip of the tongue is found to touch the lower teeth, and

the back of the tongue to lower itself and the uvula to rise and to fall, all in response to the will (to open the pharynx so that you can look down your own throat), you may be performing a useful exercise in promoting muscular elasticity of the organs. The organ may then be in a better condition to respond to the will to sing a free tone on an open vowel, or to sing a free tone on a closed vowel. However, in connection with this subject, it is best to consider that unless special difficulties, as evidenced by effect, are encountered, these special muscular exercises are not advisable.[8]

The tongue is perhaps the most important member of the physical part of speech. An unruly tongue is a formidable adversary to success, in more ways than one.

In singing, the tongue, instead of being mobile as it always should be, frequently becomes quite the opposite. Tongue stiffness is generally a sympathetic stiffness, caused by the habit of direct

[8] "Speaking generally, the soft palate should be kept in a negative state,—that is, there should be an absolute lack of tension of the muscles composing and surrounding it, that it may properly perform its real function—that of tuning the resonating cavities of the mouth and nose."—CURTIS.

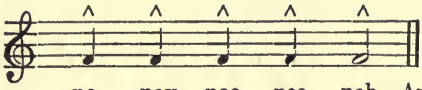
and purposeful muscular control of tone or breath or both. Under normal healthy conditions, the tongue should be as pliable and as supple, and as ready to respond to correct pronunciation of words in song, as in speech. Such, however, is generally not the case.

A stiff and immobile tongue is an ever present accompaniment of totally or partially incorrect tone. Sometimes rolling the *r* is an excellent exercise for promoting desirable flexibility of the tongue. For instance speak the words " frail " and " fragile " as in ordinary conversation. There is no particular occasion for rolling the *r* in order to make ourselves perfectly intelligible; but, nevertheless, a slight rolling of the *r* will result in concentration of the following vowels and in producing a more distinct utterance, desirable in speaking and singing in a large auditorium. It is therefore commendable both as an exercise and as a means of expression. In delivering the Italian text it is quite indispensable.

An exaggeration of the rolling of the *r* is also permissible, as testing the ability to use this mode of expression. Ordinarily, the effect would justly

create the impression of affectation in speech; but in certain forms of expressions, such as might be useful in presenting a tragedy or comedy part, such exaggeration would be perfectly legitimate and artistic.

The exercise of pronouncing words with the prefix of *l* and *n* is beneficial in bringing about the same flexibility of the tongue—as lo, lay, loo, lee, lah, etc. In the general study of songs,



no nay noo nee nah—Articulate well.
lo lay loo lee lah

words and music are of equal importance. It is an excellent plan first to pronounce distinctly the words of the text in a quiet manner as in ordinary conversation, then to pronounce the same words in an emphatic manner. Then invest the phrase with the musical attribute of sustained pitch—it then becomes song. If the sustaining of the vowel sounds is uninterrupted, and these vowel sounds merge one into the other, it becomes a phrase, characterized as "legato." If these vowel sounds are distinctly interrupted, and are sung with short,

sharp enunciation, the phrase becomes a staccato phrase.

The cart before the horse is in evidence when the instruction is given to hold the tongue immovable until the vowel is finished, and the reason for such instruction is given, "as otherwise another sound will creep in." The proper instruction would be to sustain the sound with strict attention to the maintaining of the unchangeableness of the vowel character to the very end.

It will then be found that the tongue will remain motionless during such phonation, as a natural consequence. This is illustrative of another common error, according to scientific principles.

Willing the process is a wrong mode of procedure; willing the effect is right. "The act of will is a spiritual act, and is conscious in its origin, but not in its physical processes. Its results are made manifest to consciousness through a sense: we will to move—we see the movement." (Lunn.) Likewise, we will to express by song or speech, and we hear the sounds of the voice.

As a rule, students have to be taught what is and is not good in the sounds of their own voices.

Every effective method of training the voice properly must have for one of its important component parts the training of the singer's ear to listen to his or her own voice, and to become familiar with the physical sensations accompanying correct tone production.

The true tone, expressing any emotion of the human mind, admits of a wide variety of tone coloring and tonal power, but is never accompanied by a conscious local strain or restraint—from pianissimo to fortissimo sustained singing, in the crescendos or diminuendos, or in the tone coloring incident to the natural expression of any emotion.

The ear of the expert voice trainer must be unerring in detecting faults, and it is the experience of all successful voice teachers that the student at first frequently rejects in his own voice that which he accepts as good in other voices—and *vice versa,* accepts, sometimes with extreme self-complacency, the very thing in his own voice which he rightly considers wrong in the voices of others. Here is where the truly competent vocal teacher shows his worth.

Ease of delivery, though an absolutely necessary

characteristic of correct voice production, is not by any means the only factor to be considered. Relaxed, breathy tonal work is easy but ineffective, unconvincing, and means nothing in vocal art.

The laws of psychology governing true voice production are easy to understand, but unfortunately have never received sufficient attention from vocal teachers and singers.

These laws being understood, the proper mental attitude toward the psychological and physiological influences now becomes of paramount importance.

The curse of the very prevalent mechanical system of voice building, which has proved so generally disastrous to good results, has been the persistent attempt on the part of teachers to train the voice by direct attention to the governing of one or more of the physical parts; true enough these are in use functionally, but when correctly used are governed indirectly by an all-wise and most wonderful law of nature, which provides that the various parts shall act coördinately and involuntarily, in response to the fiat of will to express thoughts and ideas of

any meaning or emotional intensity, and without local guidance or restraint.

Strict attention to enunciation, pronunciation, and distinct articulation in speech should go hand in hand, if not precede exercises in sustained tones, scales, and florid vocalization in the vocal curriculum.

In this way much of the rigid muscular vocal misery of singers would be avoided.

Too many students and singers have what may be classified as a perverted ear—due for the most part to becoming accustomed to the sound of their own voices singing meaningless tones.

In an article which appeared in the *Laryngoscope*, St. Louis, April, 1908, Dr. G. Hudson Makuen, the eminent laryngologist, says: "The faculty of hearing in so far as it relates to the faculty of speech may be divided into two classes, subjective hearing and objective hearing.

"By the former is meant the hearing of one's own speech at the time of its production by the natural organs, and by the latter is meant the hearing of the speech of others and the reproduction of one's own speech, as in the phonograph.

"That there should be a difference in these two classes of hearing is apparent when we consider their physiology. In subjective hearing the sound waves are received not only through the external auditory canal by air conduction, and through the external bones of the head, but also and in large measure directly from the organs of speech through the Eustachian tube, and through what may be called internal bone conduction.

"In objective hearing the sound waves are conducted through the external auditory canal, through the bones of the head, and to some extent also through the Eustachian tube, but the direct effect of the actual vibrations in the laryngeal, oral, and nasal cavities so manifest in subjective hearing is entirely lacking.

"In addition to these physical differences between subjective and objective hearing, there is a less tangible, but no less actual psychical difference. A man hears the speech of others with a more or less critical ear, while to his own speech he turns a tolerant and even approving ear." Dr. Makuen concludes his interesting and important article by saying: "Hearing in its finality is a

mental process, and, like all mental processes, it is susceptible to training. It is in many respects analogous to the sense of sight. We hear in great measure what we have learned to hear, and what we desire or will to hear, and it is of prime importance that we learn to hear ourselves aright, because the inability to do this leads to grave defects of voice and speech . . ."

THE PROVINCE OF THE VOICE SPECIALIST

While it may be a fact capable of demonstration beyond peradventure that, under certain mental and physical conditions, a certain line of thought and action will develop uniformly desirable vocal form for all singers, it is undeniably true that under conditions which may be described as faulty these same lines of thought and action, though thoroughly admirable and commendable in themselves, may prove to be totally inadequate in accomplishing its purpose. Under such conditions, special treatment is generally necessary, and it is quite possible that ideas and activities, seemingly antagonistic to the general approved outline of

theory and practice, may be safely advanced and exercised. In cases where the student has erroneous ideas as to the character of his tones, resulting possibly from long indulgence in faulty vocal effort, which has finally resulted in fixed habits of thought and action, producing what he believes to be good results, but which are in reality quite the opposite, it may be necessary to administer restoratives and treatment, which under more favorable conditions would be unnecessary. Then is when the skill and experience of the voice specialist is most valuable—in fact, indispensable.

The correct physical activities of a singer may be dwarfed, undeveloped from non-use, or abnormal muscular development may have been acquired. The musical sense of the beauty of his own voice may have become sadly distorted, possibly to such an extent that he is oblivious to the fact that he is uttering vocal sounds which are entirely at variance with even his own ideas of beauty or legitimate power—as he would judge them if uttered by any one but himself. Under such circumstances, it becomes necessary for the singer to be brought to a realization of these tonal defects, and in order

to accomplish this, it may be necessary for the teacher to make use of devices to promote and correct the physical activities, as well as direct the mind along certain lines which would be entirely superfluous as general treatment. The temperament, plane of thought, general intelligence as well as musical intelligence of the student, are also matters of prime consideration in determining the treatment.

The voice specialist has a tremendous field in which to operate, and his responsibilities are grave as influencing the careers of singers. Without doubt, he himself must be a singer of experience and attainments—none other is fit to occupy this field. Moreover, his ear must be educated to the sound of perfect and imperfect tones in the voices of others, and he must possess knowledge of means and devices to correct the various defects as they are encountered in the voices intrusted to his care. He must know from the sound of the voice the specific cause of peculiar defects. His ideals must be the result of knowledge and experience, that the realization of these ideals may be made manifest in the voice of his pupil.

A slight cold, if neglected, may result in serious disease, and perhaps death. A slight defect in vocal delivery may likewise develop tonal disease and eventually vocal death.

It is of the greatest moment that the field of vocal instruction should be more carefully guarded from intrusion by the charlatans and blissfully ignorant vocal teachers. At the present time it is an open pasture, in which graze the competent and the incompetent, with equal privileges, so far as any restriction is concerned.

To arrive at the goal of vocal freedom by the vocal artist, years of faithful attention are required. Vocal artists are not born, but made by slow process. Many miss the highway altogether and wander helplessly through the byways of vocal effort, or through the maze of vocal literature, accomplishing nothing. The chief cause of failure by those originally possessing the necessary voice and musical ability may be traced to first vocal instruction at the hands of incompetent teachers.

What may be accomplished in the future by way of correcting these existing conditions in the vocal field is problematical. The need for lawful

restriction is evidenced by the vast army of vocal sufferers, but a practical solution of the difficulty does not seem to be at hand. Special education of teachers, and the general education of the public, are the only possible means at the present time. The greatest difficulty in preparing the way for a rigid censorship of those who shall be admitted to the field of practice in vocal art is encountered at the very outset. The question as to what person or persons may be recognized as authority on this subject, and who may constitute a board of examiners to determine who may and who may not be permitted to teach, is one on which it would be difficult to agree. The state should stand in authority, but the state must act intelligently or not at all. Otherwise, grave complications may arise and immeasurable injustice be done to worthy vocal teachers.

The curious intermingling of right and wrong endeavors on the part of teachers presents a complex situation. The question of an authoritative adjustment which would promote the growth of right influences on the vocal world, without inflicting hardships upon the workers whose efforts are

along the right line, is one which demands careful scrutiny. It is, nevertheless, a question which imperatively demands a solution. This fact is thoroughly realized by the comparatively small force of really competent vocal teachers of the day.

Let us look back to the year 1777 and see how Mancini, the celebrated singing master at the imperial court of Vienna, thought and taught. In his "Practical Reflections on the Figurative Art of Singing" he shows that the principal work in cultivating the voice was accomplished by exercises in the *messa di voce, trillo, portamento di voce*, and exercises covering the various musical intervals, in both legato and staccato modes. In speaking of the voice he says: "The voice forms itself in the mouth by the flux created by the air in passing through the vocal organs, in the act of inspiration and expiration." Of course, Mancini did not mean in the act of inspiration. "The air from the lungs acts upon the larynx in singing just as it acts upon the head of a flute that is leaned to the lips for playing. The voice, so to speak, suspends itself in descending from the highest to the lowest tones."

Again, "We find sometimes voices that are very strong, and whose sound is vigorous, bright and liquid. Others are flexible and sweet. Some voices have wide range and are exceedingly sonorous," etc., etc., etc. The consideration in Mancini's work is for the most part of voice in effect; and the above is about the extent of the attempt to analyze conditions.

Imitation was used to a considerable extent as a means of correcting vocal defects. Says Mancini: "The easiest way, and the one by which I have had good results, is to give the student the evidence of his error; and to this end the teacher himself must faithfully reproduce the defect of the student."

It is probable that such information is responsible for the deductions of certain theorists that success in vocal teaching in olden times depended upon the teacher's ability to imitate sounds which were undesirable as observed in the voices of pupils, thus pointing out the wrong effect; likewise upon the teacher's ability to produce correct tones, thus furnishing a model for the pupil to imitate.

While it is undoubtedly true that the old methods

of voice-training were in a way imitative, it is also to be inferred, from the various records of the past, that the imitative art, if we are to so consider it, must have been an imitative art in the broadest understanding of the term, and not a purposeful imitation as in mimicry.

For, further as Mancini writes, "Singers must always pay attention not to acquire that common fault of imitating too closely what they see and hear; for instead of improving their natural gifts they will often lose them. However, I do not mean to exclude imitation, because by imitating the perfect in music, using sane judgment and modifications suitable to one's own particular talent, one perfects himself. To imitate what the great musicians have done and their originals, demands admiration on account of the difficulty in doing it."

Proper attention to the *accomplishment* of correct breath control is perhaps the most important thing to be considered by the teacher, as it is the most important accomplishment of the singer.

The competent voice specialist should know from experience what mental and physical activities are positive factors in this accomplishment, in

order that desired results should not be unnecessarily delayed.

Fears and doubts of students who are not getting along as rapidly as they should, are often allayed by teachers through the assurance that all will be well in time—that the pupil must have patience. The pupil is supposed to have confidence in his teacher, and generally puts his trust in him.

If the teacher is really competent, results should be forthcoming. Progress must be in evidence. This, however, is not always the case, and the astounding part of the situation is that many intelligent students are so generally deceived for so long a time by incompetent teachers.

Regarding the most important yet little understood factor—breath-control—the teacher should understand the correct initiative and line of thought and action necessary to bring about the right results, although it is not always necessary or advisable to say anything about the breath or breath-control.

The lack of knowledge of how to direct the attention of the pupil is the general cause of failure to accomplish.

For instance, while it may be true that the diaphragm descends during inhalation and ascends during exhalation, it is inadvisable to direct the attention to this fact, for the reason that it almost invariably results in an attempt to regulate the supply and distribution of breath from the diaphragm.

This most important muscle of inhalation is thereby seriously hampered in the natural performance of its normal functional duty. Instruction to control the breath at the diaphragm is an error which cannot be too severely condemned.

In holding or expelling the breath, the abdominal and intercostal muscles, aided by the air cells in the lungs, represent the power.

Hence the futility, if nothing worse, of instruction to control the breath at the diaphragm. But further and still more important is the truth, that even though the control of the breath may be scientifically explained, and the physical facts conclusively demonstrated, it is nevertheless a mistake to instruct the pupil to control the breath, even at the place where it is actually controlled; because under the influence of direct and purposeful con-

trol of the breath we, in fact, induce a condition which precludes the possibility of natural coördination, or of anything like spontaneity or wholesome artistic expression. It cannot be reiterated too often that it is not the physical facts of the phenomenon of voice production which the singer has to consider.

The analysis of physical facts has not served as a successful basis for the synthetic work in voice production, and the general mistake has been in assuming that the knowledge of facts concerning the actual physical phenomenon during phonation is sufficient reason for attempting to compel these very phenomena.

In singing, proper coördination results under the natural law of expression. The muscles immediately concerned, in an elastic or favorable condition, will finally automatically respond and become a part of the desired condition.

From the physical analysis of the various possible kinds of breathing, we find that there has been in the past, as there is at present, a great deal of difference of opinion as to the kind of breathing which is best for the singer. Ordinary natural

breathing differs somewhat from breathing required for singing. Dr. H. Holbrook Curtis points out very clearly the advantage of the kind of breathing which is most useful for singers, and cites the cases of celebrated artists who have used it with such extraordinary success. Among these are the celebrated tenor Jean de Reszke and the equally celebrated basso Pol Plançon.

It is not splitting hairs over unimportant details to suggest that the condition of the high chest and drawn in abdomen results naturally by standing erect with the shoulders gently thrown back. The best means of acquiring position favorable to pure, beautiful, and expressive tone is the immediate consideration; and the latter means of acquiring the position of high chest and slightly drawn in abdomen is the means which insures physical elasticity rather than the undesirable rigidity. I first studied the methods of breathing used by Jean de Reszke by closely observing him in action during a performance of "Lohengrin" at the Grand Opera House in Paris. This was previous to his début in America. A few weeks later I conferred with the celebrated Spanish tenor Vig-

nas, who was filling an engagement at Covent Garden, London. I discussed breathing methods with Signor Vignas, and incidentally he sang for me the narrative of "Lohengrin" in exactly the same technical manner that I had observed as the characteristic feature of De Reszke's work. I do not refer in any way to the method of teaching of Jean de Reszke, but merely to the actual use of his own voice, which I have always considered to be as nearly perfect as possible.

Whatever can be done towards clarifying the situation regarding the proper use of the breath will undoubtedly be a boon to the vocal world, and I unhesitatingly subscribe to what is known in medical terms as the inferior costal breathing, as distinguished from abdominal or clavicular or high chest breathing. The protruding abdomen in inspiration is an abomination, and the clavicular breathing, except as an assisting agent, is totally inadequate.

In the absence of specific instruction, such as "breathe naturally" or "just take a low breath," the tendency may be to breathe abdominally, permitting the abdomen to protrude, which distinctly

promotes what is commonly known as "forcing the voice."

The instruction to relax must be used guardedly, as the tendency to flabbiness and lack of correct flexible firmness is almost certain to follow such unqualified instruction. Relaxation must be used as a comparative term, and only to correct the condition of rigidity.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND SINGERS

The first consideration is, beautiful and expressive tone quality in vocalization, or in the delivery of phrases.

In the attempt to get the tone forward, the larynx is frequently pushed up. Remember that the tone can be forward while the larynx remains in its natural low position. Your throat will feel comfortable if you let it alone. Make no effort at the throat. Sing without thinking of the throat. Registers take care of themselves. Changes of register should occur automatically, and must always be considered, if considered at all, as natural physical consequences of pitch, character of expression, or both.

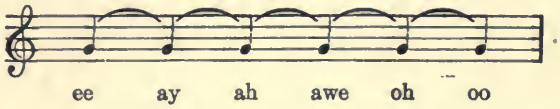
The student should practise before a mirror frequently. This will serve to guard against the forming of undesirable habits of facial expression. Unnatural facial distortions in singers are all too common. To be sure, they are largely the result of the wrong thought regarding tone formation, but the use of the mirror is a distinct advantage in vocal training.

Extending the arms freely at full length to right and left respectively, and not higher than the normal position of the shoulders and slightly in advance of the line on which you stand, is very useful in promoting flexible movements of the body and accomplishing the "lift." Coupled with the right thought, it is an extremely valuable device for the development of buoyant free tone, and bringing about the automatic breath control.

The singer's position should be erect, shoulders thrown back but not held rigidly. This will result in the favorable condition for singing described as "high chest and abdomen drawn in." Do not confound this with the wilful pulling in of the abdomen, which is to be distinctly avoided.

The vowel *ah* is the most difficult to sing per-

fectly, on account of the many degrees of tone color possible in its delivery. The free Italian *ah* is really natural only to the Italian. With singers of other nationalities, it must be acquired. E—AY—AH—AWE—OH—OO. Sing the vowels at any pitch in the evenly sustained legato mode, sliding one vowel into the next. You will at once appreciate the immense variety in tone color possible in the delivery of *ah*. Sing the compound vowel *i*, and cut off the *e* at the end. You will



then have produced the correct Italian *ah*. Vocal freedom is the birthright of the Italian. It is due almost entirely to the influence of the Italian language, which is peculiarly free from consonantal interference. In passing from one vowel to another, the resonance can and should be retained by attention to evenness of character and tone quality. Keep on the line. Merge each vowel into the next, and think of what is necessary in effect.

Loud, blatant singing is never beautiful or ex-

pressive, and is most inartistic. Sing expressively, within your natural, normal limitation, and you will be rewarded by ever increasing range, power, and beauty of tone quality. Even in the most dramatic utterance there is nothing to be gained by shrieking or forcing the voice. Commence practice with moderate power and without restraint. At first it is not desirable to practise too softly, as the tendency is towards too much restraint, resulting in pinched tone. "Piano" passages should finally be sung by willing to sing softly, but with absolute freedom—just as forte passages are sung by willing to sing with strong forceful utterance. It is not artistically accomplished by attempting to hold back the breath, or by any wilful muscular restraint. It does not involve change of vocal mechanism. Never abuse the voice by straining, either for increased range or power. Remember the conservation of voice possessed is better than restoration of lost voice. The vital energy is aroused by interest and enthusiasm. When one is alive to the subject, and not lackadaisical, much has been gained as to the initiative in singing. In considering open and closed tones, remember that

under certain conditions openness is the natural law, and under other conditions closure is the natural law. The old school practically observed this law. It is, of course, impossible to prescribe for others alone by means of printed pages. Demonstrations are necessary to insure results. Many young voices are ruined by reading of different books on the subject of voice culture and experimenting—not being able to judge as to whether the effects produced are good or bad.

In singing vowels, enunciate correctly, as you would in speech. In singing words, be sure to pronounce correctly. Thus good diction is secured. Slighting the consonants, and giving them undue prominence, are alike fatal to good results. When the old Italian masters said, "*Apri la bocca,*" they meant exactly what they said ("Open the mouth"). In explanation, they would say, "*La gola dev' essere libera,*" meaning "The throat must be free." They might also say, "*Bisogna aprire la gola,*" which, being literally interpreted, means, "You must open the throat," but their meaning was explanatory of condition only; that is, "The throat must be open." This is one of the things which

have not been stated clearly enough, if indeed it has always been understood, by writers of the present day. There is a distinction and there is a difference in the import, as will at once be appreciated by every thoughtful observer. "*Aperto e chiaro*" means "open and clear." This was a frequent admonition to students. It refers to voice, and not to throat; to sound, not to mechanism. "*Chiudi la voce e canta piu libera*" means, "Close the voice and sing more freely." Note the manner in which the student's attention was directed to voice and effect, and the style of singing in this mode of instruction. The old masters never told you what to do nor how to do it, from any learned physiological or anatomical standpoint. In most cases, they did not know about these things themselves; and because they did not know, they were free from all possible deterrent influences of this kind. The result was freedom of tone.

It is interesting and important to observe the real principle as actually practised but not explained by these old masters. At the earliest period of the vocal era, Tosi said: "Let the master attend with great care to the voice of the scholar, which,

whether it be 'di petto' or 'di testa,' should always come forth neat and clear, without passing through the nose or being choked in the throat, which are two of the most horrible defects in the singer." Garcia says: "No person can ever be a skilful singer without possessing the art of governing respiration." This statement has caused considerable confusion resulting from diversity of opinion about the manner of this governing. The art depends upon control of poise. The true point of resistance is practically found by focussing the tone forward. Reflex actions then occur. The respiration is found to be controlled, but never directly. Focussing the tone forward is an idea which is generally used with success. The influence is to make the singer concentrate on desired effect. This concentration will bring about satisfactory results in the matter of intensity and evenness of successive tones or phrases. Singing on the level of your tone, or on the line, is another expression which tends to keep the tones of the phrase even and pure. The use of the vowels *e* and *o* is particularly useful in bringing about desired focus of tone.

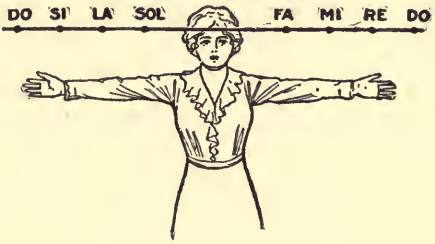
The true ringing, powerful, and beautiful tone cannot be produced by squeezing the throat. The thought of flowing voice is most important in correcting throat and tongue stiffness. Under this thought, the tongue is mobile and normally ready for articulation. The tip of the tongue during the sustaining of vowels will be found to rest more or less firmly against the lower teeth. Under these conditions the purest tones are possible. If in the consideration of flowing voice we have a physical realization of flowing breath, no attention should be paid to the fact, so long as the tone is not breathy. This flowing tone is a natural result of right conditions.

Nasal resonance and nasal tone are two different things. Nasal resonance is important and should characterize what are generally recognized as medium and chest tones as well as head tones. Nasal quality is recognized by sound. It is caused mainly by undue muscular contraction, or incorrect direction, and is never admissible. It is useless as a stepping stone to true nasal resonance. If the color of voice remains the same when the nostrils are closed as when open, it is an indication

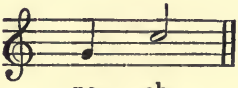
that the voice is being correctly used. The direction of tone is correct and the mechanism is working correctly.

If in closing the nostrils the sound is impaired, it is a reliable indication that the reverse is true. The smiling mouth spoken of by the old masters was meant by them to be the manifestation of the happy spirit—joyousness. When this instruction was reduced to a mechanical principal by the consideration that the mouth should be in a smiling position, naturalness of expression was jeopardized. Another case of the cart before the horse. The old Italian idea of "*impostazione della voce*," or placing of the voice, was accomplished by singing forward and focussing the sound. The idea of focussing the voice forward on the line or level, concentrating the attention upon the sound, is of the greatest value in establishing vocal poise. "Going with the tone" is also useful in promoting elasticity. Stand with the arms at the side. Now when beginning the exercise extend the arms to right and left respectively, palms up, as though holding a light object in each hand. See that the arms are extended, palms up, not higher than the

shoulders, which should not be raised. This movement will lift the body from the hips and expand the chest, thus bringing about an ideal body condition for singing. It is one of the most valuable of exercises.



When the pupil is tense and rigid, and the interference is obstinate, bending over from the hips will often be found serviceable in remedying the evil. Sing



no - ah

As the *ah* is sung, bend over from hips as in making a low bow. The mechanism of the larynx quickly adjusts itself. The degree of perfection of the mechanism is judged by the effect produced. The perfection of the mechanism can-

not be even approximated by directing consciousness to the physical process.

As a rule, the use of the consonant *n* is preferable to *m* in exercises used for the purpose of promoting resonance.

In singing, see that the neck and head are in a free and loose condition. If the voice is focussed forward as evidenced by pure and beautiful tones, the breath will economize itself. Manage the voice with the ear. Don't manage or try to manage the vocal mechanism. When the muscles in the neck are in evidence during song, it is a positive indication that the tone is not well produced. When the corners of the mouth are drawn back, the tone will become hard and strident. Mouth or facial muscles should not be rigid or set. Never smile artificially. The smiling countenance representing joyousness must be a natural result of happy thought. It is spiritual in its origin.

In general, the singing voice of the Italian is characterized as open or closed. "*Piu aperto*" or "*Piu chiuso*" represent their preference. The consensus of opinion, however, is that "*Chi Canta, Chiuso Canta dieci anni di piu*" (He who sings

closed sings ten years longer). The import is that the use of the voice well focussed forward is more conducive to its long life.

Students should realize the importance of doing small things well. If this is attended to, the big things will take care of themselves. Always sing exercises with strict attention to tone quality. In regard to all graded exercises—so-called methods—always remember that the important consideration is not what you sing, but how you sing it.

Forcing the voice is generally the result of either the desire to sing too loudly or with too big a tone, or of attempting to locally adjust the vocal mechanism; in short, singing *with* the throat instead of *through* the throat.

The natural position of the voice in effect, unhampered by rigidity of the body and sympathetic rigidity of the throat, is forward in the mouth. Correct forward placing is never forced.

The word "relaxation" in vocal art is used comparatively as opposed to "rigidity." Flexible firmness—the result of vitalized mental or emotional energy—is the ideal condition. The cause of stiffness is generally the attempt to produce voice

in a mechanical or artificial way, or the effect of such previous attempts—habit.

Vitalizing the mind and body and directing the will power towards producing idealized sound instead of towards governing the physical process, is the best means of promoting vocal freedom.

The thought of purposely producing " the stroke of the glottis " is abominable! The mind should never be directed to that end. What is described as " the stroke of the glottis " is purely resultant. The glottis takes care of its functional process without suggestion.

The necessary muscular tension for artistic tone is a natural result of correctly idealized tone, followed by the spontaneous effort in its production.

The swelling and diminishing of a tone—" *messa di voce* "—should be brought about by a strictly mental process, willing the result in effect, without any attention whatever being paid to the breath.

As a principle, the idea of first localizing the effort instead of willing the end in view is erroneous, alike for beginners and advanced students. It is not only entirely unnecessary, but is absolutely pernicious in doctrine. If you think local effort,

the habit thus formed will be difficult to break.

What is generally understood by the profession as the correct placing of the voice should occur spontaneously, and will always be recognized. It is part of the singer's sensation, but there should be no thought of purposeful placing of the voice The thought of directing the voice forward and focussing the tones forward is much more useful, and avoids the tendency toward stiffness of the body.

The Use of Vocal Exercises

The first object of vocal exercise is to strengthen voice muscles and make them pliable and elastic. Exercises should accomplish their object in due course of time, providing that the mental attitude regarding this development is favorable.

The moment development of tones which are not in use during speech, but which are required in song, commences, the question of how to do it confronts the singer. The acquiring of skill in singing is handicapped most seriously and most generally by just one thing, which has been reiterated in these chapters, *i.e.*, the idea of the possibility of mechanical vocal adjustment—a thing which is for-

eign to the art of self-expression, and foreign to the natural law of physical development as applied to musical expression. The physical obeying the mental indirectly, as applied to the art of self-expression, must not be confused with the established fact that the physical obeys the mental in a direct material way—if it is so desired.

The fiat of will directed towards direct purposeful guidance may be applied, and certain mechanical results can be obtained. This very possibility has been the cause of the persistent failure to comprehend the deeper truth that the muscles obey the fiat of will to express human emotions without direct conscious guidance or surveillance. The danger of the will being used to develop the muscles in a purely mechanical way is, that the abnormal development of muscles, not only useless as an assisting agent, but positively detrimental to effects desired, is more than likely to occur. It is the same sort of danger which threatens the success of an athlete who may become muscle-bound through persistent effort in the wrong direction. The training of the muscular system for the physical requirements of singing calls for the most ex-

pert knowledge and skill on the part of vocal teachers, and perhaps nowhere is a greater misapprehension of the requirements in training more in evidence than in the use of the vocal exercises. The mind must be kept steadfastly on the goal of effect.

Go into any large studio building and listen to the more than meaningless, the heartrending, almost inhuman sounds emanating from the throats of many students during their lessons. What a pitiful story is told in their plaintive efforts to find the way, and what a colossal monument stands, not mutely, to the benighted views of the day concerning voice-training, current among the hundreds of teachers who are the real perpetrators of the living outrage!

Witness among the vast number of students the seeming prostitution of their divine right to the exercise of just a modicum of common sense in the matter. The students sing their exercises or fancy that they sing them, but in the absence of any thought of intelligent or natural expression during the supposed singing, they are actually uttering sounds which could be more properly char-

acterized as cat-calls, shrieks and howls, grunts and groans, which might be expected to be heard only in the corridors of an insane asylum.

Tell the operating surgeon—the vocal teacher—or the willing patient victim—the pupil—of your impression, and you will be patronizingly told that all this is necessary to the placing of the voice. Yes, they are getting their voices placed in a position where it is incapable of expressive utterance either in truly powerful and intense mode or in the nuance of delicate shading.

Is useless, superfluous vocal effort which so often brings disastrous results to remain a lasting omnipresent heritage of deeply planted error?

It is to be hoped not.

The saving value of knowledge of the truth regarding fundamental principles would right matters to a very considerable degree, and eventually bring about universal vocal freedom. Properly graded preliminary work, and the more advanced studies combining the vocal and consonantal exercises, elements of musical diction or practical singing, properly applied with the correct mental attitude, would speedily rectify the most destructive

evil of the dominating mechanical idea now in general use.

The following exercises are presented as a condensed progressive method and comprise the important vocal movements for developing poise, power, and agility. The devices are suggested as a means for overcoming special vocal defects which may have been previously acquired by singers, as well as for beginners.

The pitch as indicated is not arbitrary, and may be changed to suit the requirements of individual voices.

The principal devices recommended are, first, the physical "lift" which is best accomplished by standing erect and gently stretching the body upward from the hips. The condition of elasticity as opposed to rigidity is imperative—hence the upward stretch of the body should not be overdone. This activity is conducive to a condition of flexible firmness of the immediate physical parts involved in tone production, rather than a condition of relaxation.

The necessary tonicity of the voice can never be established while the muscular system is relaxed.

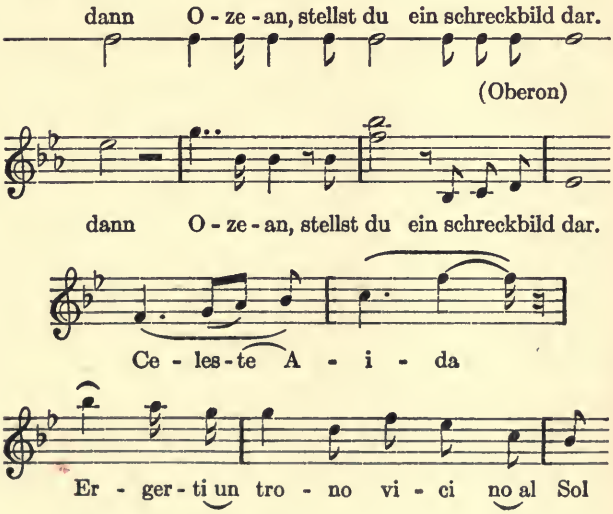
The second device is not physical. It is the singing on an imaginary line. This device is one which was used by many of the Italian masters of my student days in Italy, and which was used by the old Italian masters who taught these singers and teachers. It was handed down by word of mouth and by precept and example—but I have never found a lucid explanation of the idea in print. In my opinion it is the most effective thought ever advanced by the representatives of old Italian schools for promoting ideal conditions. I believe it to be one of the great secrets of the successful training of singers in the art of "*bel canto.*"

The following diagram represents the idea, which may be easily understood. The vertical line

represents the notes of the music. The horizontal lines represent the *imaginary* line of singing, which

is at the height of the forehead and at any distance whatever from the singer. The thought of the line of common level of all tones should be carried out in singing exercises, including all intervals—likewise in the singing of songs.

In this celebrated phrase in the soprano aria from "Ocean, thou mighty monster," the high B is seldom sung, owing to the extreme difficulty in securing the correct vocal form. The thought of the line is a great aid in this, as in all especially difficult passages of music.



These two phrases in Verdi's *Aïda* present vocal conditions diametrically opposed to each other—one the ascending, the other the descending scale.

In both cases lift to the level and sing on the line from the beginning to the end of the phrase.

When the student first begins to sing correctly, he often experiences certain physical sensations incidental to change of pitch, especially in singing exercises and phrases containing notes separated by wide intervals. The student, however, should not allow his attention to be diverted by this manifestation of physical activity of the inner throat, but should be steadfast in his purpose to sing beautifully and evenly. Such physical changes are normal and natural and are necessarily attendant upon tone delivery. They should be allowed to occur. This is why teachers of understanding warn you not to hold the larynx.

The physical phenomena may include changes in the length, breadth, thickness, or plane of the cords. These may vibrate partially or fully. The amplitude or rapidity of vibrations may differ, and the various conditions may offer a scientific explanation of the physical phenomena, but are not for

the student's immediate consideration. Sing all tones for high, medium, and low notes on the imaginary line. The tones of the extreme high notes will seem to vibrate at the forehead, nose, and roof of the mouth. This character of head resonance will be retained to some extent in the tones of medium and low notes. These things become matters of observation and are thrust upon the consciousness.

EXERCISES

In order that the singer shall be vocally well equipped, the voice must respond to every pitch desired, as also to quality, quantity, and color, within its natural limitations. These limitations are by no means fixed, except temporarily, for the voice is like a growing plant. Its growth and development depend upon the manner of its treatment. We shall proceed upon the assumption that the voice will gradually take on its natural habiliments in response to mental conception of effect desired and without recourse to any mechanical adjustment foreign to natural expression.

Stand erect and easily, throwing the weight of

the body forward, the shoulders well back, the chest up. See that you are not in any way perturbed, and that you are not rigid. Be calm. Now, without any thought of taking breath or controlling breath in any way, sing the exercises, listening to your own voice carefully as you sing, and note the effect. Sing with the idea of producing sounds of equal volume and characteristically the same in quality. In short, sing evenly. Do not pinch or pull in an effort to adjust the position of the tones, and on no account attempt to locally control the breath. Forget it. Remember that breath control is automatic and develops without thought. Sing with the idea of expressing some idea. The mental attitude has everything to do with the result. First, sing the exercises mezzo forte, and idealize the stating of any fact. This we will call the narrative character, and the narrative character is not necessarily emotional. Avoid the emotional for the present, but sing with living interest. Sing directly forward, as in earnest speech. *Sing on the line.* Whatever the interval to be sung, sing on the line. Never give any thought to change of registers. Registers change automatically, unless

there is a condition of rigidity, causing interference with normal, natural vocal action. In such cases the remedy is mental energy. Use the will-power to arouse the vital force to produce the musical result and not to locally adjust the mechanism.

The idea of commencing vocal work by holding the head and jaw immovable is erroneous. It promotes rigidity. Move them both freely, just to prove that the thing is entirely possible. You will find that true repose must be the kind that permits you to move freely without upsetting the normal vocal poise. If you don't believe in such things, try it, and you will commence to feel like a free agent, instead of a vocal slave—perhaps for the first time in your life.

Before commencing the exercises, one word more about singing on the line, that its meaning may be perfectly clear: This one idea is indeed "*Multum in parvum*" (Much in little). If you sing on the line, you avoid the necessity of thinking a number of things at the same time, which is generally difficult and confusing.

The mental attitude is this: I want even tones, alike in quality and quantity, so that the exercise

will run smoothly in legato style. Now all that is necessary is to sing as though speaking earnestly, keeping the actual delivery of each note on a men-

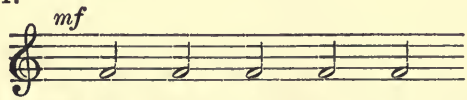
tally conceived line on a level with the forehead, which is represented in the diagram. Make no attempt to adjust the throat or control the breath.

Neither repress nor press. Let the mentally conceived tone pour forward. Instead of singing up and down, sing mentally on a level or line.

By this mental conception as a guide, the actual firmness of tone combined with flexibility of the parts so much desired, will commence to develop. Pay no attention to the throat. Do not hold it firmly or otherwise. Forget it. True resonance will then commence to be in evidence.

This may result in a consciousness of a gentle rising and falling of the larynx. If so, do not attempt to control it. Keep your mind on evenness of effect. The consciousness of this physical activity may be thrust upon the singer at first, but should be allowed to take care of itself.

Ex. 1.

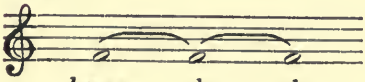


(In singing "ah," sing as "I," eliminating the final e.)

ee ay oh oo ah

Sing without crescendo or diminuendo.

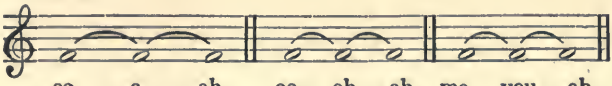
Ex. 2.



hoong — oh — ah
hoong — ee — ah

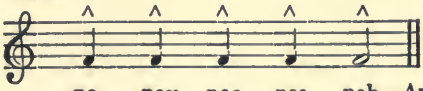
Sing the sound of "hoong" as in hook, not as in hoot.

Ex. 3.



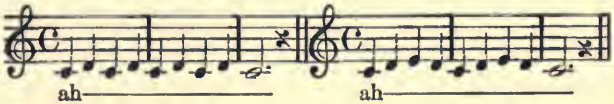
ee — a — ah oo — oh — ah me — you — ah
(as in day) (as I)

Ex. 4.

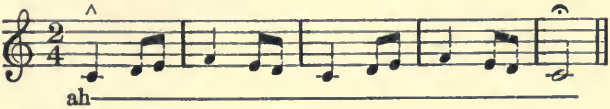


no nay noo nee nah—Articulate well.
lo lay loo lee lah

Ex. 5.

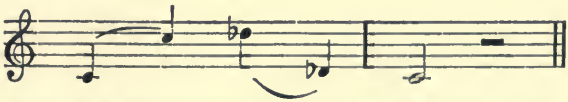


ah——————— ah———————
(And the various vowels at discretion)
Sing in different keys.



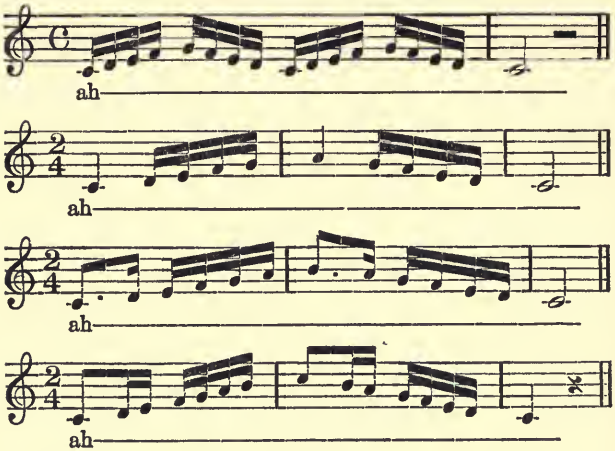
ah————————————————

Ex. 6.

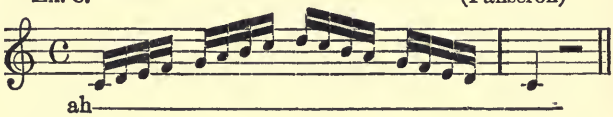


In starting the first note of this exercise, stretch or lift the lower ribs quietly from the base of the spine. The octave C will be found to adjust itself. In going to the D♭ avoid cramping the throat. Let the tone flow forward. Then in descending to the D♭ below continue lifting. Finish the exercise keeping the last note on the line. This is difficult to express by means of cold type, but when understood it is one of the most valuable exercises in voice training.

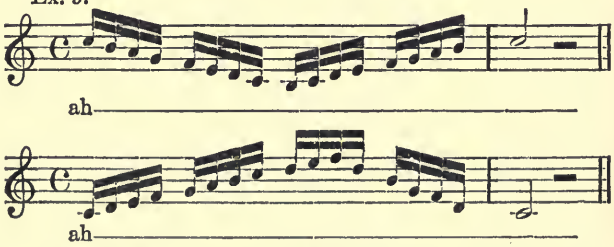
Ex. 7.



Ex. 8. (Panseron)

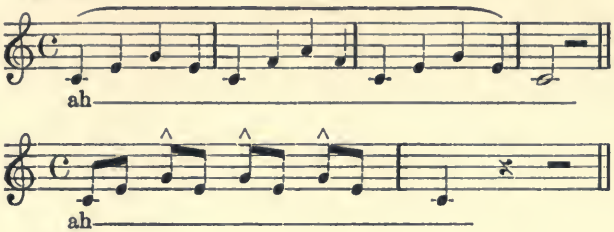


Ex. 9.

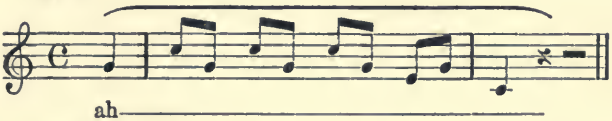


In singing this or any descending scale *think* each descending note higher than the note preceding.

Ex. 10.

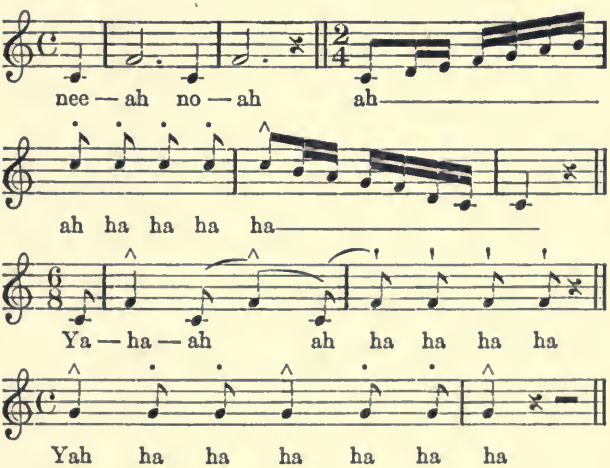


Ex. 11.

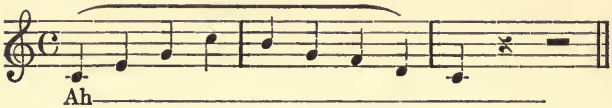


NOTE.—Always sing ah as I eliminating the final e.

Ex. 12.

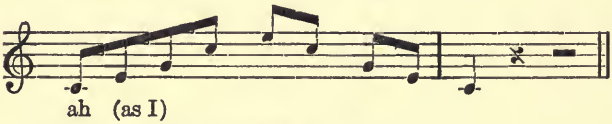


Ex. 13.



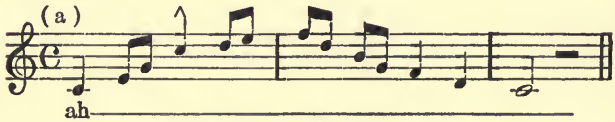
Sing with legato and staccato modes.

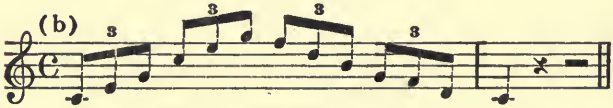
Accent, but do not especially aspirate the "ha."

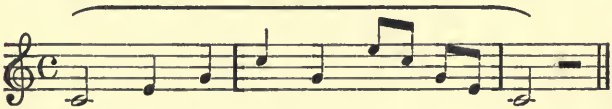


Also practise this exercise in staccato mode.

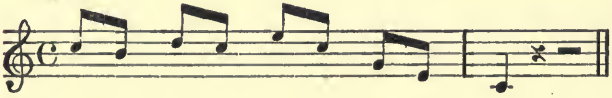
Ex. 14.



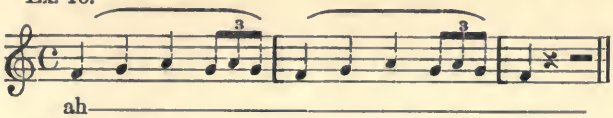




Ex. 15.

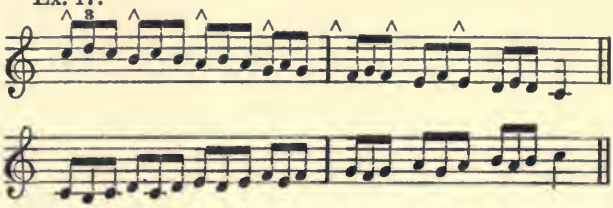


Ex. 16.



First, sing slowly in pure legato mode, then sing more rapidly.

Ex. 17.



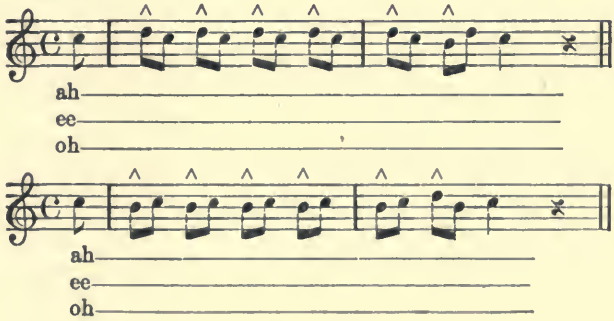
In these two exercises sing the first triplet slowly, then gradually accelerate the tempo.

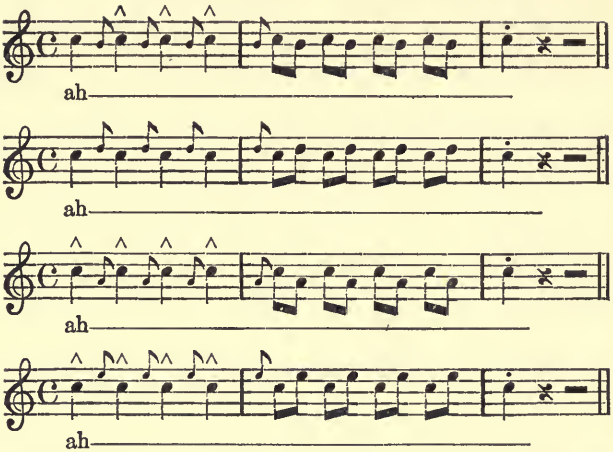
In the descending exercise lift as it descends.

EXERCISES FOR THE TRILL.

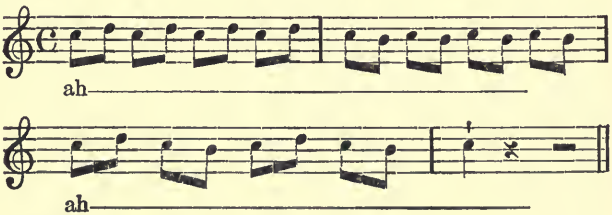
Trilling is an easy accomplishment for some voices, but for others it is extremely difficult. The trill, however, with patience and perseverance, can be acquired by all.

Ex. 18.



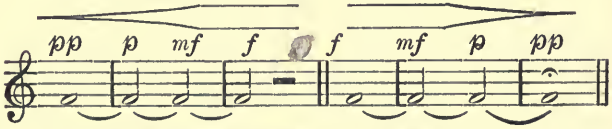


Sing the grace notes with a short snappy effect, breaking from each grace note into the note following with a sharp accent.



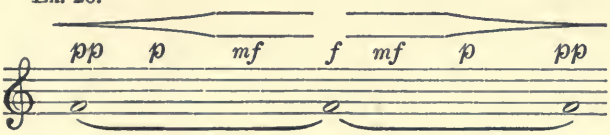
Ex. 19.

The "Messa di Voce."



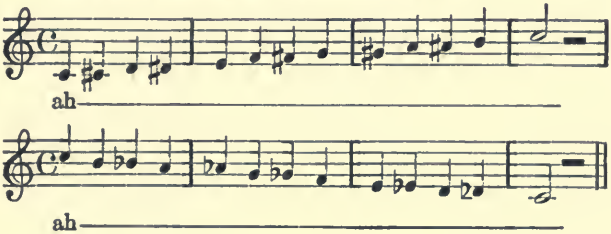
In practising these exercises do not sing FF.

Ex. 20.



Commencing with the most delicate sound possible, swell the tone to forte and diminish. First crescendo and diminuendo rapidly, then gradually more and more slowly. Finally carry out the extreme perdendosi letting the sound die away to a whisper.

Chromatic scale, ascending and descending.



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